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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

# VIRTUE IN MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

by

© JANE O'DEA

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND

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# DEDICATION

For the Cork musical tradition
and in loving memory of
Frau Tilly Fleischmann

## ABSTRACT

Music in performance has a pertinent role to play in moral education. It is itself a form of moral conduct, one which entails the acquisition and exercise of virtuous character traits and dispositions and in which one learns and thereafter comes to love and be capable of wise, practical judgement.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I : VIRTUES AND PRACTICES 1

CHAPTER II : THE PRACTICE OF MUSICAL INTERPRETATION 15

CHAPTER III : AUTHENTICITY: A VIRTUE OF MUSICAL PERFORMANCE 60

CHAPTER IV : HISTORICAL AUTHENTICITY: A VICE OF MUSICAL PERFORMANCE? 83

CHAPTER V : MUSICAL PERFORMANCE AND MORAL EDUCATION 104

BIBLIOGRAPHY 138

# Introduction

That there is some plausible, possibly analogous connection between the two value disciplines ethics and aesthetics is a familiar notion among philosophers. In most cases, however, studies in which possible connections are cited or explored, tend to be of a highly generalized and abstract nature. One reads of the ethical dimension of the arts in general, of concepts common to both disciplines such as "disinterestedness," and so on. It is rare enough that one finds mention of the ethical dimensions of a particular art form with the possible exception of literature. Indeed, I think it is plausibly argued that one almost never hears of the ethical dimensions of what we might term the "non-literary" art forms.

Yet Aristotle, in the Politics (1339a 14-26), makes the following provocative statement:

> . . . it is not easy to distinguish what power it (music) . . . has, nor for the sake of what one ought to partake of it -- whether for the sake of play and relaxation, or (because) . . . music is in some respect directed to virtue and . . . is capable of making the character of a certain quality habituating it to be capable of right enjoyment; or whether it contributes in some respect to pastime and 'phronesis.'

It is this statement which fundamentally underlies this dissertation. In the broadest possible sense, the following pages are intended as an interpretation and perhaps even a

vindication of Aristotle's arresting comment. Therein I consider and explicate a plausible connection between the art form music and those human qualities we term "the virtues."

Music is , however, a very broad area. Consequently, I have selected a particular aspect of the art form and my enquiry is confined to that area. Since I am a performing musician, and, moreover, since Aristotle's remark was addressed specifically to the activity of music making, i.e. to the acquisition and practice of musical skills of singing or playing musical instruments, the area of music selected is that of performance. Thus, when I speak of acquiring musical "skills," I am referring not so much to the skills involved in musical composition, or those involved in listening to music, as rather to the skills peculiarly involved in musical performance. The dissertation thus, in an overall sense, is primarily concerned with explicating the ethical dimensions of music making -- i.e. of learning and performing musical works.

One of the central problems in developing a thesis involving the virtues, is determining which account of the virtues, if any, one will use. For virtues are usually defined and explained in terms of some prior account of certain features of social and moral life, and the particular account one may select may relate only tangentially to the social and moral mores of one's own time.

Accordingly, while it is Aristotle's comment which fundamentally underlies this dissertation, it is not his treatment of the virtues which forms the basis of my

argument. Instead, I have selected an Aristotle-like account, one formulated for our own time, but one, nevertheless, which is a reconstruction of his original argument. The one I have chosen is that of Alasdair MacIntyre, whose After Virtue is an attempt to reconstruct an Aristotelian account of the "good life."

Virtues, for MacIntyre, enter into the "good life" in three important ways:

(1) Human well-being embraces the pursuit of what he calls "practices." And virtues are an important feature of those practices in that they sustain the latter, enabling us to achieve certain goods internal the them.

(2) The good life, however, does not consist solely of engagement in various practices. Rather, as with Aristotle, it must be understood holistically as the goodness of a life seen as an integrated whole, one wherein the particular partial goods of practices are put together in a certain order, according to their proper rank, as it were. One needs the virtues and the kind of insightful understanding Aristotle calls "phronesis" to discern and maintain allegiance to this order.

(3) One seeks the good life and engages in practices not as a solitary individual but rather as a member of a particular community, class, people or nation, and a bearer of the particular values of that community. These values necessarily have a historical dimension in that behind them lie traditions of thought and action which must be sustained and cherished albeit not in a rigid, unquestioning manner. It is the virtues

which enable those traditions to flourish in that they alone enable us conscientiously to sustain and cherish them.

I will argue that music in performance fosters the acquisition and exercise of certain morally relevant and desirable character traits and dispositions through being itself a "practice" with goods internal to it, the achievement of which entails the cultivation and exercise of virtuous dispositions. I will further argue that among the virtues entailed, one in particular -- that of authenticity -- is especially important because it has to do with sustaining and cherishing the ideals of excellence embodied in musical performance traditions. Finally, I will argue that music in performance has a significant contribution to make to moral education through being itself a form of moral conduct, one wherein one learns through doing and thereafter comes to love and be capable of wise practical judgement.

# CHAPTER I

## Virtues and Practices

Like Aristotle, Alasdair MacIntyre situates virtue in certain types of well defined human practice. Most specifically in After Virtue,[1] he argues that such practices provide an arena in which the virtues may be cultivated and exhibited. How do practices provide such an arena? In order to answer this, one needs to pose two questions: (i) what are "practices" in MacIntyre's sense and (ii) how do they relate to the virtues?

MacIntyre stipulates that by a "practice" he means:

> Any coherent and complex form of socially established co-operative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to and partially definitive of that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence and human conceptions of the ends and good involved are systematically extended.[2]

He cites as examples of such practices "the arts, the sciences and certain types of intellectual and athletic game."[3] And

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[1] Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).
[2] Ibid., p. 175
[3] Ibid., p. 186

offering a partial and tentative definition of virtue as it relates to practices, he suggests that a virtue is:

> An acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods.[4]

These two definitions embrace several important notions all of which need to be explained.[5] I shall begin with the notion of goods internal to a practice. MacIntyre sees certain goods or benefits as accruing to engagement in practices. And employing an Aristotelian distinction, he cites these as external or internal depending on their origin. External goods are goods externally and contingently attached to practices by the accidents of social circumstance. There are always alternative ways for achieving such goods and their achievement is never to be had only by engaging in some particular kind of practice. Internal goods, on the other hand, are goods which cannot be had in any way but by engaging in practices. They can only be specified in terms of a particular practice (and by means of examples from that practice); and they can only be identified

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[4] Ibid., p. 178

[5] Whereas the details of my explanations rely on MacIntyre's original account of virtues and practices in After Virtue (chapters 14 and 15), they also owe much to John Kekes superb explication of the Aristotelian destinction between external and internal goods in his article entitled "Constancy and Purity". The article is in Mind (1983) Vol. 92. pp 499-518.

and recognized by the experience of participating in the practice in question.

Since all of this is best illustrated with an example, let us consider the benefits a currently successful world chess champion derives from engaging in the practice of chess. The external goods participation in the practice affords her are the prize money she wins, the status and prestige she enjoys in being thus world champion, the respect she receives from fellow grand-masters and chess devotees in general. The internal goods consist in such things as: her devising, and deriving satisfaction from so devising, a new, original variation on a well known opening strategy; her putting together in a particular game, and deriving satisfaction from so putting together, an imaginative combination of attacking moves; her developing, and deriving satisfaction from so developing, the ability to withstand the stress of competition and to play well under pressure; her continuing, satisfying growth in analytical skill and mastery of end game play; her feeling part of a long and noble tradition.

Now it will be noticed immediately that the external goods mentioned above - the prize money our champion receives and the prestige and status that accrue to winning the title of world chess champion - all come to her from the outside. They are rewards given by and received from external sources - e.g. chess institutions such as the International Chess Federation (F.I.D.E.) and/or various corporate sponsorships. Moreover, they are only contingently

attached to the activity of chess. There are any number of alternative ways for our champion to acquire wealth and prestige, chess by no means constitutes the only way to achieve such goods.

By contrast, internal goods are not given or received. Rather they are developed. No chess institution and/or corporate sponsor bestows on one mastery of end game play, or strategic imagination. Rather, these are capabilities one develops and perfects oneself through engaging in the activity of chess. Moreover, they are their own reward. When a chess player finds satisfaction in putting together an imaginative combination of attacking moves, the source of her satisfaction is the activity of chess itself not some external prize of honour that coincidentally attaches thereto.

In other words, unlike the external goods cited earlier, the internal goods mentioned above cannot be had in any way but by participating in the practice of chess. One can only specify them in terms of chess -- e.g. notice my specification employed such notions as "end games," "defensive strategies." And only someone with actual playing experience can recognize and appreciate all that they entail -- e.g. only someone with the relevant experience can recognize and appreciate what constitutes a forceful, imaginative combination of attacking moves.

But MacIntyre cites yet further important differences between internal and external goods. It is characteristic of external goods that when achieved they are always some

individual's property and possession - e.g. the prize money and prestige that accrue to winning the world chess title may correctly be described as belonging to the champion. Moreover, typically they are such that the more one person has of them, the less there is left for others. In any average chess tounament, for example, the lion's share of the prize money and prestige goes to the winner, the shares thereafter diminishing according to the standing achieved.

External goods are, in short, competitive. The measure of wealth, status and prestige achieved typically depend on a person's standing in a hierarchy. And it is the task of relevant social institutions not just to distribute rewards per se, but to distribute them appropriately and in due proportion. That is to say, it is their task, among other things, to compare and rank people's achievements and to distribute external goods accordingly. This can be done justly or unjustly. And if, as is often the case, a relevant social institution errs, or is corrupt and allows such things as prejudice, favoritism, etc. to enter into the distribution of external goods, people may not get what they deserve on the basis of their achievement.

Now MacIntyre maintains that internal gods are not at all like this. First of all, unlike external rewards, their achievement benefits not just particular individuals but the whole community who participate in the practice. Second, the extent to which one achieves them does not depend on an external system of distribution. Rather it depends on the self - - on whether or not one develops and exercises certain

necessary skills and dispositions. Indeed, unlike external goods, internal goods can be achieved and enjoyed without reference to any relevant social institutions. One need not play in a world class tournament in order to put together an imaginative combination of moves; such a combination may be devised in any ordinary, non-tournament chess game. Finally, internal goods cannot but be deserved.

Here again MacIntyre's thought embraces several provocative notions all of which need to be carefully explicated.[6] I shall commence by considering the putative "sharedness" of internal goods. In order to grasp exactly what MacIntyre has in mind here, it is necessary to step back for a moment and look a little further into his notion of practices.

Practices involve among other things public standards of excellence. That is to say, they involve elaborate superstructures of rules, principles and what I shall vaguely call "ideals," all of which govern the manner in which particular activities are pursued, make it possible to engage in them with more or less skill, sensitivity and finesse; and a knowledge of which is essential for anyone wishing to participate meaningfully in the activity in question.

Rules essentially determine right and wrong ways of doing things. In the case of chess, rules determine the kind of

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[6] And here again, although the following account relies on MacIntyre, I have found R.S.Peters' acount of "activities" in Ethics and Education (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966) pp.144-66, very helpful; similarly, I have found Noel Carroll's article "Art, Practice and Narrative" very useful for its illuminating account of MacIntyre's notion of tradition. The article is in The Monist, April 1988, Vol.71, No.2., pp.140-56.

moves a player is permitted to make. And acquiring knowledge of these is a relatively straightforward affair -- one simply learns what one is and is not permitted to do, and having learnt it, one behaves accordingly. But in highly complex activities such as MacIntyre has in mind, rules typically permit a variety of alternative choices -- e.g. in chess, the player has a vast range of choices among permissible moves. And herein the notion of tradition and what I shall call "practical principles" enter the picture.

These essentially encapsulate the wisdom of the past, summarize masterful and appropriate ways of bringing about the ends of activities. In the case of chess, for example, practical principles encapsulate masterful and appropriate ways of bringing about checkmate; or, where one finds oneself playing from a defensive position, masterful and appropriate ways of preventing being checkmated. Such encapsulations offer us guidance, suggest more or less skillful ways of doing things, which suggestions help us to select from among the myriad choices admissible, proper, fitting courses of action.

Now MacIntyre is absolutely insistent that no less than rules, one cannot be initiated into a practice without becoming familiar with, and accepting the authority of its relevant practical principles. As he puts it:

"If on starting to play baseball, I do not accept that others know better than I when to throw a fast ball and when not, I

will never learn to appreciate good pitching let alone to pitch."[7] In other words, in the type of practices MacIntyre has in mind, mastering purely technical skills --e.g. learning how to pitch, is not enough. One needs to learn how to use those skills to accomplish the end desired. And practical principles serve to teach us exactly that.

How does one learn these relevant principles? Succinctly, one learns them through practice, coaching and imitation. In the case of chess, for example, beginners frequently learn sound principles of opening play -- that one ought to develop one's pieces, strive for control of the centre of the board -- not so much by direct transmission, as rather by studying and employing standardized openings such as the Ruy Lopez or the Giuoco Piano which exemplify these principles in action. And indeed there are good reasons for learning them thus. For by practicing/imitating the opening moves of experienced grand masters, beginners come not just to be familiar with sound opening principles, much more important, they come to understand and appreciate their point and purpose in the game that is chess. And thus having come to understand them, players are enabled to use them thereafter in devising excellent opening strategies of their own.

And herein we come to the heart of the matter: one achieves the internal goods of practices, not by simply repeating actions that have proven or have been deemed

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[7] MacIntyre, After Virtue, p.177.

successful in the past. Rather, one achieves them by appreciating (i.e. coming to understand) the ideals of excellence embodied therein and thereafter seeking to approximate those ideals in one's own performance.

In other words, practices are not static -- do not have a goal or goals fixed for all time. Rather they tolerate and even encourage change while yet remaining the same practice. They do this by what Carroll aptly terms "a creative use of tradition,"[8] by participants utilizing the public modes of reasonng and explanation developed therein in ever new contexts, ever new practical situations; and by their devising thereby their own "original" exemplifications of excellence which are as transformations of what has gone before, which modify and extend previously established conceptions in the light of new creative insights developed therein.

And now at last one may begin to understand why MacIntyre cites the achievement of internal goods as benefiting not just particular individuals, but the whole community who participate in the practice. For in the case of open-ended ideals of excellence, such as MacIntyre has in mind for practices, questions of scarcity of the ends pursued do not arise. That is to say, no one's pursuit of excellence in chess opening strategy is threatened by my becoming absorbed in the same quest. Neither does my devising a particularly brillant opening preempt the efforts of others to do likewise. Quite the

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[8] See Carroll, op. cit. p. 143.

contrary, my excellent strategy may well facilitate further strategic excellence by opening up new directions, new ideas for openings, pursuit and elaboration of which, by myself or by others, will enrich the practice of chess, extend human powers to achieve excellence therein.

And now too one may begin to understand how the achievement of internal goods depends entirely on the self. Moreover, one may begin to discern the pertinent role virtuous dispositions may play therein. For if internal goods are achieved by absorbing and utilizing in ever new contexts, the wisdom of the past - the skills, modes of reasoning, explanation and judgement developed therein, then it follows in order to achieve those goods, one has to learn and develop those skills, modes of reasoning etc. In the case of chess, one has to learn, among other things, sound opening, middle and end game strategies, and the ability imaginatively to employ the principles embodied therein in one's own playing; one has to develop analytical skill - the ability to scan positions and notice different directions potentially arising therefrom: one has to develop judgement - the ability to select from among various choices available, right and appropriate action given the particular circumstances.

Now manifestly one can only develop all of these abilities for oneself. Moreover, developing them characteristically takes time, effort, and most of all practice. And herein the virtues make their appearance. For one cannot accomplish any of the above without concomitantly developing and putting into

practice certain appropriate attitudes and dispositions. It takes courage, for example, to move beyond existing conceptions of excellence and to seek to establish, and derive satisfaction from so establishing new ones that approximate the ideals embodied therein. In chess terms, it takes courage to forsake the safety of well established opening strategies and to go out on a limb and try to develop an original variation thereon. For one may fail in one's attempt and as a consequence lose the game.

But notice that whereas courageously attempting to develop an original variation on an opening strategy does not guarantee the achievement of internal goods -- does not guarantee one's approximating and deriving satisfaction from so approximating the ideals of excellence embodied therein, losing one's nerve and failing to exercise such courage effectively prevents one from ever achieving them. One cannot develop one's own original excellences by staying within the confines of previously etablished ones. Such development entails going out on a limb and risking failure. It entails cultivating and exercising the virtue of courage.

Another virtue required by the internal goods of practices is "truthfulness" -- the ability to see or to listen carefully to what we are told about our own inadequacies, and to make appropriate adjustments in consequence. Neither is it difficult to grasp why cultivating such truthfulness is essential. For if achieving internal goods entails mastering and developing certain appropriate skills and abilities, then one needs to recognize less than adequate development and/or

performance, and to make corrections accordingly. But once again, whereas cultivating truthfulness will not guarantee one the achievement of internal goods, a lack thereof - e.g. indulging in self-deceptive fantasies about the superiority of one's abilites, will effectively prevent one's ever achieving them.

Patience and tenacity are two other virtues required by the internal goods of pracitices. As was suggested earlier, developing the abilities necessary for the achievement of such goods takes time, effort and practice, and patience and tenacity relate to all of these. Patience is required because abilities often mature very slowly, and if one is not prepared to wait for them to develop, and to think the wait worth while, then the level of competence attained will be less than adequate and the achievement of internal goods jeopardized accordingly. Tenacity is required because abilities are often exacting and difficult and one can all too easily become discouraged in one's attempts to develop them. But as before, whereas perseverance in one's efforts to achieve mastery of required abilities will not guarantee one the achievement of internal goods, a lack thereof, e.g. giving up at the first difficulty encountered, will preclude one's ever attaining them.

One's attitude to tradition also has a direct bearing on whether or not one will attain internal goods. And herein the virtue, humility, becomes important. For in order to accept the authority of existing standards of excellence, a certain measure of the latter virtue is required -- totally refusing to accept the

authority of tradition amounts to refusing to learn the skills, modes of reasoning etc. entailed in the achievement of internal goods.

Finally, there are all the virtues of intelligence characteristically associated with "reasoning." For if achieving internal goods entails developing and employing certain appropriate modes of reasoning, then their (i.e. internal goods') attainment also entails cultivating and putting into practice, and "enjoying" cultivating and putting into practice, certain appropriate excellences of intelligence. It entails exercising and enjoying exercising such excellences as: careful deliberation and wise practical judgement, impartiality, consistency, coherence, non-arbitrariness, perceptiveness, honesty, concentration, doubt, etc. Without cultivating and willingly putting into practice virtues such as these, the whole reasoning process cannot get off the ground and the achievement of internal goods is obviated accordingly.

In summary, unlike external rewards in whose achievement luck may play a significant role, internal goods cannot but be justly acquired. For they come to someone, if at all, only as a result of their becoming a better person -- only as a result of their developing alongside certain human capabilities certain virtuous character traits and dispositions, among others, the ones cited above.

And now one may begin to appreciate how MacIntyre's notion of practices may serve to explicate Aristotle's provocative comments about the potential role of music-

making in moral education. For if the art of music in performance has goods internal to it, the achievement of which entails cultivating and exercising certian virtuous character traits and dispostions, then one may indeed argue after Aristotle that "music is in some sense directed to virtue and . . . is capable of making the character of a certain quality . . . "[9] But does music in performance have such internal goods? It is this question I must now seek to answer.

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[9] Aristotle, The Politics (1339a 14-26). Trans. Carnes Lord, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984)

## CHAPTER II

### The Practice of Musical Interpretation

Internal goods consist in the goods one derives from engaging in certain, specific practices. As such they can only be specified in terms of that practice. Accordingly in order to determine the goods internal to the practice of music in performance, one must come to understand the nature of the latter. This is my purpose in the following chapter.

In general, one is said to "perform" music when one (a) plays it on some sort of musical instrument[1] and/or (b) sings it. In performing music in that general sense one may, however, be engaged in one of several quite different activities: one may, for example, be performing a piece that one has composed oneself, perhaps even written out (then one is said to "play one's own piece"); or one may be inventing it then and there ("improvising"). If one is not the composer but instead is playing a piece composed by someone else, then that piece may be handed down in an oral tradition (then one may be said to be "playing by ear"); or the piece may be writtten down in a

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[1] Although today "musical instruments" would include such things as synthesizers and other electronic instruments, these are not what I have in mind in the following chapter. Rather I have in mind the more traditional instruments - e.g. pianos, violins, french horns and so on. Electronic instruments introduce new dimensions into the notion of performance which will be ignored in this thesis.

musical score (in which case one is said to be "interpreting the score"). All of the above named activities qualify as legitimate instances of "musical performance." However, for reasons of time and space, I shall look only at the last named activity -- the interpretation of musical scores -- and from now on shall use the term "musical performance" with that specific version of it in mind.

In this species of musical performance, the performer begins with something already created -- the musical composition. This essentially consists of musical sounds or tones grouped, ordered and related into coherent patterns of one sort or another, and which are designated (i.e. symbolically notated) in a musical score the interpretation and performance of which is the performer's task. On the most basic level, performance-interpretation obviously involves sounding aloud -- i.e. reproducing in actual sound sensation, the tones indicated on the musical score. And since it is in that sense akin to oral recitation, to the saying aloud of literary or scripted texts, musical performance interpretation may be initially, if tentatively, characterized as a "form of saying."[2] But

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[2] Richard E. Palmer in Hermenutics (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969) distinguishes three basic directions of meaning of hermenuein (to interpret) and hermeneia ( interpretation) in ancient usage. These three directions, using the verb form (hermenuein) for purpose of example, are (1) to express aloud in words, that is "to say"; (2) "to explain," as in explaining a situation and (3) " to translate," as in the translation of a foreign tongue. All three meaning may be expressed by the Englisb verb " to interpret" yet each constitutes an independnt and significant meaning of interpretation. Interpretation, then, can refer to three rather different natters: an oral recitation, a reasonable explanation and a translation from another language - both in Greek and in English usage. I will argue that

there is more to musical interpretation than the mere "sounding aloud" of tones indicated on a music score, a factor clearly illustrated by criticisms which chide performers for "merely playing the notes" of for "playing mechanically." And, if performance-interpretation then involves not just sounding aloud indicated tones but doing something else besides, the question then becomes: what is this something else that the performer does? And how does it relate to the concept of interpretation?

At this point it may prove useful to focus on the notion of interpretation in general and extrapolate thence to interpretation in musical performance. One must proceed cautiously here, however, given the ubiquity of the notion of interpretation and the generality of the usage of the word.[3] Nevertheless, some very generalized remarks, cited judiciously, may indeed prove useful.

Interpretation is characteristically linked to understanding.[4] To interpret something is to characterize it in

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musical interpretation relates most specifically to (1). However, aspects of (2) and (3) also enter into it.

[3] For example: a scientist calls her analysis of data "interpretation"; the literary critic calls her examination of a work "interpretation; a translator of a language is called an "interpreter"; news commentators are not designated thus, yet we speak of them "interpreting the news; one interprets - or misinterprets- the words and gestures of a friend, a letter from one's publisher, or a sign on the street. In short, as Palmer (op. cit. pp. 8-9) suggests, interpretation is "perhaps the most basic act of human thinking; . . . . existing itself may be said to be a constant process of interpretation."

[4] The verb "hermenuein" and the noun "hermeneia" point back to the wing-footed messenger-god Hermes who is associated with the function of transmuting what is beyond understanding into a form that human intelligence can grasp. Hermes was credited with the discovery of language and writing - the tools which human understanding employs

such a way as makes it intelligible. For example, mothers ordinarily interpret the crying of their new-born babies as indicating discomfort of some sort. And, acting on the basis of that interpretation, they try to alleviate their discomfort through feeding them, changing their diapers, burping them and so on. Interpretation in this case refers to the mothers' attempts to render a particular situation -- the babies' crying -- intelligible. And since a similar quest for intelligibity seems to lie implicit in all of our diverse usages of the word "interpretation," we may cautiously and tentatively characterize "interpretation" as the process of bringing a thing or situation from (relative) unintelligibility to understanding.

This suggests a pertinent new dimension to the notion of performance interpretation as a "form of saying." For if interpreting something is characterizing it in such a way as makes it intelligible, then one may extrapolate that where performance interpretation involves "saying," it involves more than "just saying." Rather it involves saying something in a particular manner, one that subtly explains it, makes it capable of being understood. Indeed, bearing in mind that the musical composition reaches the performer embodied in a static, visual and silent entity -- i.e. the music score, we may cite performance interpretation as the process whereby that entity is transmuted into an intelligible, aural happening in time. Performance interpretation, in short, may be

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to grasp meaning and to convey it to others. See Richard E. Palmer, op.cit.

characterized as the process which renders a musical score "aurally understandable."

But, it may now be asked: what is it to render a musical score "aurally understandable"? What kind of understanding are we raising here? In raising the issue of musical understanding one finds oneself immediately operating on rather shaky ground. For musical understanding is a highly complex elusive affair, one that even ardent music lovers are frequently hesitant to claim possession of.[5] But although it is not an uncommon occurence to hear even zealous music listeners protest that although they love music, they nevertheless do not understand it, one senses intuitively that there is something radically wrong with that assertion. For as Meyer laconically comments, "People seldom like what they do not understand. Quite the opposite . . . they generally detest and reject what seems incomprehensible. Witness the hostility which contemporary music so often excites in audiences accustomed to . . . tonal music."[6]

Accordingly one needs to ask: what is the nature of music lovers' hesitations? Why do they feel compelled to make such odd assertions? Generally speaking when music lovers say that they don't "understand" music, they mean that they can't read a music score, can't analyze a symphony, have no idea about

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[5] See Michael Tanner and Malcolm Budd, "Understanding Music" in the Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume LIX 1985.

[6] Leonard B. Meyer, Explaining Music (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973). p. 16.

such things as cadences, contrapuntal devices, transitional passages and the like, and have even less idea of such monumental constructs as Schenkerian theory. In short, their protestations focus on the fact that although they love music and can perhaps articulate their responses to it in extra-musical, quasi-emotional terms, nevertheless in the final analysis they know next to nothing about it. They cannot explain in purely musical terms how musical compositions work. Neither can they explain (again in purely musical terms) what makes a work like Schubert's: "Die Wintereise" a great musical composition. In summary, for many music lovers, musical understanding is equated with the ability to give appropriate explanations. And because they see themselves as lacking that ability, they concluded that although they love music and experience it with enjoyment, nevertheless they obviously do not "understand" it.

But here one must query: is this really the case? Is understanding in general and musical understanding in particular indeed linked to the ability to give explanation appropriate or otherwise? Most precisely, is a firm grasp of musical terminology and/or musical theory necessary in order to experience a musical work with understanding? And here once again one encounters what seem like anomalies. For if musical understanding does indeed necessitate a firm grasp of musical terminology and/or theory, then as a phenomenon it is restricted to a mere handful of musicologists. And while such a conclusion might be congenial in academic faculties of music, as

Tanner sardonically observes, one does not have to indulge in any dubious form of intentionalism to recognize that "composers have not usually written their music for the benefit of professional analysts."[7]

Furthermore, if one considers other types of activity in which the phenomenon of understanding is involved - e.g. linguistic activities, and while not attempting to assimilate music to language, one notices nevertheless certain important similarities between linguistic understanding and musical understanding, one may begin to have even more serious reservations about music lovers' protestations. For it is readily apparent in the case of linguistic understanding that one does not have to be able to read words, sentences, paragraphs or poems in order to understand what is said to one. Much less does one have to have the linguist's knowledge of phonological, syntactic and semantic structures. Neither is one's understanding of a performance of Shakespere's Henry V dependent upon one's knowing explicitly all about such things as prosodic devices, dramatic structures, etc. In other words in language there appears to be a mode of understanding - one Moravcsik aptly terms "understanding simpliciter"[8] - which is linked neither to literacy nor to explicit explanation, but which operates in fact independently of both. So too in music, I will argue, understanding is not dependent upon knowledge of musical terminology, theory or compositional techniques. As in

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[7] Tanner, op.cit. p. 220.

[8] J. M. Moravcsik, "Understanding" in Dialectica Vol. 33. 1979.

the case of language, music too has an "understanding simpliciter" which is linked neither to explicit explanation nor to the ability to read musical notation and which in fact operates independently of both. It is to this mode of "understanding simpliciter" that we must now turn our attention.

First and foremost, what does "understanding simpliciter" consist of? As Moravcsik describes it, understanding simpliciter consists of "seeing large complexes with their ingredients interrelated in the proper way."[9] In musical terms, understanding simpliciter consists of hearing large complexes (musical compositions) with their ingredients (musical sounds) interrelated in the proper way.

In other words, understanding simpliciter occurs when the sound structures that are musical compositions are heard - i.e. aurally perceived as such. It takes place when we listen attentively and intelligently to musical compositions and make sense of the ongoing succession of sounds, hear them not as an homogenous undifferentiated series of discrete, unrelated sound stimuli but rather as complex, coherent, unified and meaningful sound structures.

Understanding simpliciter consists in effect of hearing tones interrelated as motives, motives interrelated as sections, etc. It describes our capacity to experience aurally or hear directly such musical phenomena as cadences, contrapuntal

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[9] Ibid., p. 210.

devices, transitional passages and the like. Succinctly, it constitutes our ability to perceive aurally various kinds of musical patterns, processes and relationships.

Now it will be noticed immediately that this direct mode of understanding is not unlike the more explicit explanatory version described earlier, in that both of them are essentially concerned with discerning musical structures. But whereas explicit, explanatory understanding is concerned with articulating in some sort of propositional terms the patterns, processes and relationships constitutive of musical works, understanding simpliciter is concerned simply with perceiving them aurally. It has what Moravcsik terms a "non-propositional ingredient"[10] in that it essentially involves tracing or following aurally the essential sound structures that explicit understanding seeks to articulate propositionally.

And now it may reasonably be asked: given that understanding simpliciter operates independently of explicit, explanatory understanding, how do we come to acquire it? How do we learn to hear directly, "map" aurally, various kinds of musical patterns, processes and relationships? Basically we learn to hear musical structures directly through "experience," through constant practice in listening and/or performing. Most specifically we learn it through a kind of induction, as a consequence of repeatedly hearing compositions wherein sounds are interrelated in certain specific ways, we generalize

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10 Ibid., p. 205.

thence and tend to interrelate sounds accordingly. And insofar as the musical sounds encountered are susceptible of being interrelated thus, we "understand" them, make aural sense of them.

But insofar as the musical sounds encountered are not thus susceptible, we will in fact fail to make aural sense of them. And because music is not a kind of "universal language" but rather encompasses a multiplicity of structuring styles that vary "from culture to culture, from epoch to epoch within the same culture, and even within the same epoch and culture"[11] this is neither an unlikely or even an unusual event.[12] As a consequence, for example, of constantly hearing compositions wherein tones are sounded together as harmonies and harmonic progressions, Westerners characteristically generalize thence and tend to listen to and to structure musical sounds vertically as well as horizontally.[13] But notice that whereas Westerners characteristically tend to structure musical sounds thus, Easterners accustomed by contrast to a more monolinear style of music (e.g. to the North Indian Raga), do not. Instead generalizing from their musical composition, they characteristically tend to listen to and to structure musical sounds purely horizontally.

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[11] Leonard E. Meyer, Emotion and Meaning in Music, (Chicago: University Press, 1956).

[12] For an illuminating account of the culture - bound structures of music see Peter Kivy, "Breaking the culture Barrier" in The Corded Shell (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

[13] Ibid., pp. 87-91.

Now insofar as both listeners bring to bear on each other's music their ingrained modes of listening and of sound - structuring, both will have unsatisfactory aural experiences. The Westerner accustomed from birth to a music that has developed vertically will try to listen vertically to the monolinear style and will find it "lacking"; furthermore unaccustomed to listening purely horizontally and unfamiliar with the subtle kind of melodic structuring that Eastern monolinear music characteristically employs, she will likely miss (i.e. fail to trace aurally) the complex but highly subtle linear patternings that make monophonic music "full in spite of its purely horizontal nature."[14] On the other hand, the Easterner accustomed from birth to a music that has developed purely horizontally will try to listen horizontally to the vertical - polyphonic Western style and will find its melodic outline sadly lacking in terms of subtle, melismatic, linear complexity; furthermore, unaccustomed to listening vertically and unfamiliar with the harmonic processes that Western music characteristically employs, she will likely miss (i.e. fail to grasp aurally) the vertical structuring indigenous to western style musical compositions.

In other words, as the above examples hopefully illustrate, musical understanding simpliciter is not an innate, intuitive ability capable of cutting across different musical

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[14] Ibid., p. 90.

traditions and cultures.[15] Quite the contrary, because it is acquired in connection with particular musical sytles and is moreover peculiarly relevant to those styles, it is very much culture bound and tradition specific. Direct understanding of musical works, in short, presupposes familiarity with the structuring proceses of traditions wherein those works are located or at least contiguous traditions. But, and this is the crux of the matter, albeit musical understanding simpliciter requires familiarity with relevant structuring procedures it does not require explicit conscious familiarity. Rather it requires experiential, aural familiarity. And because the latter is achieved simply through practice in listening and/or performing and constitutes in effect a kind of ingrained non-propositional, aural - perceptual, listening - structuring skill, one may be, in fact typically one is, entirely unconscious of even having developed it.[16]

And now perhaps it may be possible to make sense of music lovers' sometimes odd protestations. For typically aware of their lack of musical theoretical knowledge, but typically unaware of having developed the aural - perceptual, listening skill that constitutes the heart of musical understanding simpliciter (and which enables them to experience musical

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15 It is of course possible to devise hybrid musical styles -e.g. James Galway's renditions of Japanese tunes. But it is not these hybrid styles I have in mind when I speak of musical understanding simpliciter not being able to cross cultures. Rather I have in mind authentic (i.e. unwesternized) traditional styles. These will appear foreign and strange to the Western ear.

16 Moravcsik, op. cit. p. 215.

works with enjoyment), they conclude that although they love music they do not understand it. But such a conclusion is entirely erroneous. For insofar as they are capable of aurally tracing the essential structures of musical works they do in fact "understand" them. And while one might plausibly claim that understanding (musical and otherwise) admits of degrees,[17] and that knowing explicitly about such things as cadences, transitional passages etc. enhances one's direct understanding[18] by sharpening or vivifying one's aural perception of these phenomena, such a claim is not incompatible with the central argument advanced here -- that it is possible to understand and to enjoy music without any such knowledge.

Furthermore, the analysis of musical understanding simpliciter offered above also enables us to understand why music lovers so frequently articulate their reponses to music in quasi-emotional terms. Notwithstanding the constant philosophical arguments back and forth as to whether music is or is not capable of expressing emotion, it is at least plausibly argued that many musical structures bear a remarkable resemblance to what I shall loosely call emotionally expressive behaviour. We hear a musical phrase as "sad" (e.g. the opening phrase of Beethoven's Arioso Dolente, opus 110), when we hear it as a human utterance[19] (i.e. as an Arioso - "something

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17 See Tanner and Budd, op. cit.

18 Ibid., p. 247.

19 As Kivy remarks "a moment's reflection on the way we talk about music . . . reveal[s] . . . how deeply 'animistic' our perception of it really is . . . . A fugue subject is a statement . . . A 'voice' is still what musicians call a part in a polyphonic composition, even if the part is meant to be

sung"), and perceive features of that utterance as resembling (tracing in sound) the characteristic fall of the human voice when it weeps, sighs, or in some other such ways expresses sadness.[20]

Neither is Beethoven's piece an isolated example of such musical emotion tracing. Vocal music in particular is rife with cogent exemplifications of such resemblances. The similarity, for example, of certain musical lines when sung or played to the kind of subtle vocal inflections we characteristically employ to express our emotions and feelings is superbly illustrated in Baroque Recitative (e.g. in the recitatives Bach writes for the Evangelist in the St. John and Mathew Passions, or indeed in the purely instrumental recitative of his Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue) Radically different but no less expressive in our own time are the vocal type inflections George Crumb employs in his Ancient Voices of Children (1970)

But musical structures trace aurally not just linguistic expressions of emotion, they also model in sound, other aspects of emotive life e.g. how we feel, hold ourselves, move under the influence of particular emotions.[21] It is no accident for example, that Beethoven's Arioso Dolente moves as we characteristically move when we are sad - i.e. "adagio" - very slowly. Similarly, Elliot speaks of a musical phrase (e.g. one of

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played on an instrument rather than sung by a voice. Violins as well as sopranos are instructed to sound 'sotto voce'. A pianist is advised to cultivate a 'singing' tone. A good woodwind is said to 'speak' easily." Kivy, op. cit. p. 58.

20 Kivy, op. cit. pp18-26.

21 Ibid., pp 46 - 56.

the phrases of Schoenberg's 6 Kleine Klavierstucke op. 19) "making a tender gesture."[22] Even where particular musical phenomena (e.g. the major mode) are not of themselves analogues of expressive behaviour, their customary association[23] with certain emotional states (e.g. the association of the major mode with happy emotions) may render them emotionally suggestive. Finally where no particular emotions are traced either through association or otherwise, it is not implausibly argued that music bears a resemblance to the subjective phenomenology of our emotive life - i.e. to the "feel" of our emotions, tensions and release from tensions, expectations and fulfillments.[24] (Leonard Meyer, for example, argues convincingly[25] that syntactical harmonic structure set up, among other things, tensions, expectations etc.). In summary, whether through resembling the "feel" of our emotions, through resembling expressive behaviour linguistic and/or otherwise, through association or (and probably most often), through a combination of any or all of the above,

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22 R.K. Elliot, "Imagination in the Experience of Art" in the Royal Institute of Philosophy lectures, Volume VI, Godfrey Vesey, (editor), 1971 - 1972. p. 94.

23 Kivy, op. cit.

24 R. W. Hepburn, "The Arts and the Education of Feeling and Emotion" in Dearden, Hirst and Peters (editors), Education and Reason, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972). Hepburn is referring here to Pratt and Langer's theories of musical expressiveness. See Carroll C. Pratt, The Meaning of Music, (New York: McGraw - Hill, 1932); Susanne K. Langer, Feeling and Form.

25 Leonard E. Meyer, Emotion and Meaning in Music, op. cit.

musical compositions are not infrequently conceived of as "sound maps"[26] of feeling and emotion.

And now it is perhaps possible to understand why emotive terms so frequently arise in music lovers' discussions of music. For if musical understanding simpliciter consists in aurally perceiving the patterns, processes and relationships constitutive of musical works, and those patterns, processes and relationships are (for whatever reason) powerfully suggestive of emotion and feeling, then not unreasonably music lovers may experience musical compositions as highly expressive. And this being the case, it is hardly surprising that in articulating their responses to music, music lovers resort to emotive - expressive type language.

But is is not at all obvious that in articulating their responses thus, music lovers are behaving inappropriately. For insofar as their emotionally couched pronouncements are dependent upon and arise out of the intelligent cognition of musical structures,[27] then they are dependent upon and arise

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26 Kivy, op. cit. p. 53.

27 It is of course possible for our emotionally couched pronouncements to derive from other sources. For we do sometimes think of extra musical matters (e.g. our own experience of unrequited love) when listening to music (e.g. to Schubert's Die Schone Mullerin). And insofar as our emotionally couched pronouncements derive from our own personal experience and have little or nothing to do with the actual music, then they may indeed be self-indulgent meanderings. But although lapses of concentration such as the one described above are characteristically deplored in the experience of musical works, one wonders if this reaction is not in fact misguided. For not infrequently, the listener's identification with the emotions traced will serve to heighten her concentration, make her more cogently aware of musical patterns, processes and relationships. In other words, it does not automaticaly follow from the fact that we sometimes think of extra musical matters in listening to music that our articulations thereafter

out of the same musical phenomena as theorists' more abstract, technical formulations. And the difference between their articulations is merely one of vocabulary. Neither is this as significant a difference as one might think. For albeit music lovers' enunications appear much less "scientific" and much more subjective than do theorists' abstract formulations appearances in this case are deceptive.

For insofar as music lovers' perceptions of musical features as emotionally expressive are based on the features in question frequently being associated with certain emotional states, their responses are rationally justifiable. As whether or not something is frequently associated with something else is an objective matter ascertainable through the usual standards of good inductive reasoning.[28] And insofar as their perceptions are based upon the recognition of structural similarity, their responses too are rationally justifiable for the criteria for ascribing expressive predicates to musical structures (e.g. in the case of sadness, falling pitch, slow movement, etc.) are the self-same criteria we apply to human expression (e.g. to "sadness") in general. And if these criteria of human expression are public, commonly accepted, part of the "logical grammar" of emotive predicates like "sad", "happy" and so are

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are contaminated with purely subjective dimensions. Quite the contrary, as Elliot suggests (op. cit.), the extra-musical thoughts may serve to focus our atttention more vividly onto musical structures. And as we shall see in the text, insofar as our subsequent pronouncements are dependent upon and arise out of the keen perception of musical structures, they are neither un-objective or inappropriate.

[28] Kivy, op. cit. pp.132 - 149.

conventional rather than idiosyncratic, then, because they are parasitic on the latter, so too are the criteria of musical expression.[29]

Indeed that emotionally couched descriptions are not always rejected as self-indulgent, purely subjective meanderings, but rather are accepted (at least under certain circumstances) as conventional intersubjective depictions, is demonstrated in programme notes designed to help listeners follow the progress of musical works. For such commentaries characteristically employ a mixture of musical and non-musical vocabularies. Furthermore, purists inclined to dismiss such commentaries as trivial nonsense might do well to remember that in the writings of Tovey, Rosen, and even Schenker, one finds not infrequently (among the purely musical depictions), openly emotive vocabulary.[30] Returning now to the business of musical interpretation and its connection with understanding; what we find in music are two kinds of interpretation; two kinds of interpreter. On the one hand there are critic theorists. These are primarily concerned with explaining in some sort of propositional terms how and why musical compostions work. In other words, they are concerned primarily with promoting explicit musical understanding. Neither can it be denied that their pronouncements offer an important contribution to the understanding of musical works. For their explicit and often exhaustive emotive/analytical descriptions of how and why

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29 Ibid.,

30 Tanner and Budd, op. cit.

musical compositions work, may serve to enhance or sharpen the sensitivity of the ear to musical patterns and relationships. In the case of works composed in new and unfamiliar styles, they may help us to reorient our listening expectations, i.e. alert us to the possibility of alternative patterning proceedures thereby prompting us to overcome the aural prejudices which ingrained habits of aural perception inevitably engender. In the case of works composed in more familiar styles, because not everything in most works of art is immediately perceivable, their pronouncements may serve to make us aware of details we had missed, or perhaps were only dimly aware of. And the awareness thus fostered may transform, render more vivid and perspicacious our subsequent aural experiences.[31]

On the other hand there are performer-interpreters. These are not so much concerned with explaining in propositional terms how musical compositions work as rather they are concerned with portraying non-propositionally in sound sensation, the workings of musical compositions -- the patterns, processes and relationships constitutive of musical works. Moreover, they are concerned with portraying those workings in a particular way - one that facilitates their being heard as such, furthers aural perception of the sound structures that are musical compostions. In short, performer - interpreters are primarily concerned with promoting aural

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31 Ibid., p. 247.

understanding - i.e. musical understanding simpliciter. Their task is to sound musical works in such a way as renders abundantly clear to the attentive, perceiving ear the patterns, processes and relationships contained therein.

Now in endeavouring to promote direct aural understanding of musical works, performers are guided by certain rules and procedural principles. First and foremost the composer's score constitutes a more or less definite set of directions which suggest a particular interpretation. Music scores stipulate, for example, certain specific aspects of the sounds performers will produce e.g. their pitch, approximate duration, volume, timbre, tempo, etc. They also determine how the individual musical stimuli will relate to one another in that it is the composer who is responsible for structuring and ordering the musical sounds into intelligible patterns, processes and relationships which coherent structures he fixes and preserves through writing them down in musical notation. But although one could indeed characterize music scores as constituting for performers elaborate sets of "sounding" rules, it must be emphasized immediately that those rules do not fix with rigid and inflexible precision exactly what the performer's interpretation of the composition is to be. Indeed, they cannot do so for at least one very important reason.

No matter how detailed and specific a score, music notation, of its very nature, can specify only a part of what is

actually sounded in performance.[32] For there is a significant difference and crucially important distinction to be made between that with which the composer works i.e. conceptualized, imagined sound and that with which the performer works i.e. actual physical sound sensation. And music notation cannot capture the complex richness and peculiar sensational qualities of the latter. As aurally experienced, musical sounds characteristically exhibit singular, unique and definite tonal properties (i.e. they display subtle nuances of intonation - of pitch, duration, volume, timbre, etc.) which give to the tones a special and peculiar sensational savour, perhaps even, it is often argued, and indescribable affective quality.

Singular tonal qualities ("tone colours") such as these cannot be captured by musical notation because the latter essentially generalizes what is experienced aurally as uniquely given. For example, the dynamic marking "P" (piano) on a music score indicates that a tone or passage of tones should be played or sung "softly". The perceived "softness" of a particular musical tone, however, is ordinarily influenced by a variety of factors. It may be influenced: (1) by the timbre of the tone (e.g. generally speaking a french horn sounds "softer" that a trumpet); (2) by the acoustical environment wherein the sound is made (e.g. what sounds "soft" in a resonant cathedral would probably sound "loud" in a carpeted, small drawing room), and

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[32] See Leonard E. Meyer, Explaining Music op. cit. p. 13.

(3) by the stylistic context in which the sound occurs (e.g. a "soft" passage in a Racmaninov piano concerto is probably acoustically equivalent to a loud (forte) passage in a Mozart piano concerto.

But, although different shades and qualities of "softness" are clearly given in aural experience, music notation cannot and does not take these differences into account. Instead, it merely indicates to the performer, the notion of softness in general. It stipulates that on the whole a tone or group of tones should be sounded "softly" but leaves the judgement as to what constitututes "softness" in each particular situation to the individual performer.

In other words music scores "sketch" rather than fully determine how musical works are to be performed. And it follows accordingly that although it is not incorrect to characterize them as sets of sounding rules (which rules performers are indeed constrained to follow), this description is much less stringent than it might appear. For while music scores do indeed fix and determine in a general schematic sort of way the broad form and shape of musical compositions, within the limitations set by those broad schematic[33] outlines, a variety of interpretive soundings is both possible and permissable. It is the performer's task to go beyond what is only schematically presented in the score and taking into account what the latter of its very nature cannot accomodate --

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[33] I owe this notion of "schematic" rules to Carles E. Larmore, Patterns of Moral Complexity (Cambridge University Press, 1987) Chapter I.

the singular and unique properties of sound sensation it is her task to particularize what is only generally indicated therein. It is her responsibility to exercise imagination and judgement and to select from among the permissible soundings, one that effectively promotes aural understanding.

Now it is here in connection with this selection that a second set of constraints come into play. For although it is indeed performers who ultimately decide what every tone will "actually" sound like, this is not to suggest that they make their decisions in an arbitrary, autocratic fashion. On the contrary, their selections are controlled at least in part by performance traditions or what is sometimes termed "performance practice".[34]

Neither can one over-emphasize the crucial role of performance tradition in performance interpretation. For given the complex diversity and infinite variety of actual sound sensation, without them performers, in going beyond the generalized musical score, would be faced with an infinite and overwhelming array of possible soundings so that finding an artistically adequate one is like shooting in the dark. Traditions, even flawed ones, have the utility of furnishing "interpretive exemplars" -- general approaches to the business of interpretation. And by using these general approaches - putting into practice the practical principles contained therein - performers are enabled to discrimimate, reject certain tonal

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[34] See Leonard E. Meyer, Explaining Music op. cit. p. 13.

qualities as inappropriate, accept and endorse others as eminently susceptible of aural understanding.

For example, unlike the earlier part of this century where an essentially romantic, nineteenth century concept of performance sonority was the accepted norm, and was applied thence to all compositions be they composed originally in the romantic idiom or not (e.g. witness the Von Bullow editions of some of J. S. Bach's works), performers nowadays, are much more cognizant of bygone modes of performance, and are very much concerned to sound composition in their "original" sounding style - i.e. in the mode of performance sonority practiced at the time. Such a "historically authentic" sounding it is argued, constitutes a more appropriate rendition of the musical composition.[35] Hence, whereas before it would have been considered totally acceptable to realize the keyboard music of Bach or Handel on a piano rather than on a harpsichord or clavichord, it is now in the latter half of the same century considered somewhat inappropriate to do so.[36] Moreover, even when they are realized on a piano, one generally no longer hears Von Bullow nineteenth century type interpretations. Rather, one is encouraged by present day performance practice to develop interpretations which approximate pianistically the type of sounding sonority that

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35 For a fascinating account of how this change in sounding style occurred see Raymond Leppard, Authenticity in Music (London: Faber Music, 1988).

36 See Richard Taruskin, Daniel Leach-Wilkinson, Nicholas Temperly and Peter Downey, "The Limits of Authenticity: A Discussion" in Early Music Vol. 12 No. 1 1984.

would have been in vogue in Bach's own time e.g. slender incisive tone qualities, semi-detached rather than legato articulation, terraced dynamics, etc.[37]

But while it is undeniable that by furnishing such general approaches, performance traditions "direct" performers, one must be careful not to overestimate the extent of that direction. For just as musical notation can indicate only the general form and shape of musical compositions, so too performance traditions can encourage us to employ only generalized "types" of soundings. The practical principles generated therein are no more specific than the generalized directives furnished by the composer in the music score.[38] No less than the dynamic marking "p" for example, the practical principal "employ terraced dynamics in performing the music of Bach," while it precludes certain types of dynamic realization, is still broad enough to accomodate a variety of subtly different yet equally correct, concrete soundings. In other words, not unlike music scores, the general approaches furnished by performance traditions do not have sufficent content to establish exactly how they are to be carried out in actual practice. Once again this has to be figured out by the individual performer, employing imagination and judgement, and taking into account what neither musical notation nor the practical principles

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37 See Rosalyn Tureck, An Introduction to the Performance of Bach (London: Oxford University Press, 1960).

38 Meyer tellingly suggests that "performance traditions may be considered as a kind of unwritten notation". Explaining Music, op. cit. p. 13.

engendered by performance traditions can possibly accomodate - the singular and unique properites of sound sensation.

And herein, inevitably certain performance skills[39] enter the picture. For performers do not work with sound sensation as a kind of generalized "brute" phenomenon. Rather, they work with a highly refined and discriminating version of the latter, one that reflects and presupposes their having developed the ability to sculpt or shape tonal properties. Accordingly it is to the pertinent contribution made by practical "sounding" skills to performance art that we must now turn our attention. In doing so we will hope to gain some insight as to how performers manage to convey aural understanding.

Ordinarily, the possession of a musical sounding skill involves physical dexterity or co-ordination. The concept of sounding skills thus, in relation to musical performance is closely tied up with notions of physicality.[40] It also refers to abilites that are typically acquired and perfected through training or practice in the activity itself and which require a greater or lesser amount of knowledge, reflection and

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39 Musical performance presupposes a whole range of skills. It presupposes, for example, musical competency skills - e.g. the ability to read a music score, to differentiate pitch etc. And it manifestly presupposes the "sounding" skills that will be dealt with forthwith in the text. Since it is "sounding skills" that facilitate aural understanding, my discussion of performance skills will focus primarily on these.

40 See Robin Barrow, "Skill Talk" in Journal of Philosophy of Education Vol. 21. No. 2 1987.

understanding.[41] That musical performance art is frequently associated with physical skillfulness is attested to by the familiar phenomenon of the "virtuoso" performer. Such performers, exhibiting as they often do a dazzling array of technical abilities demonstrate par excellence the association of musical performance with complex feats of physical dexterity and co-ordination. Furthermore, the undeniable popularity of such performers indicates that virtuosity is frequently enjoyed and appreciated as an integral aspect of performance art.

Now, of course, it must rightfully be amended that not all musical compositions require virtuosic displays of technical brillance. Rather, music composition and performance may be described in terms of a kind of continuum with at one end compositions requiring a great deal of physical dexterity (e.g. Lizst's Transcendental Etudes), and at the other, those requiring very little (Beethoven's Bagatelles). However, albeit there is a range of physical skillfulness in musical compositions, the fact remains that even the most modest performance of the simplest musical compostion takes a certain measure of physical skill. Hence, the association of performance with (greater or lesser degrees of) physical skill is, in the main, justifiable.

It is also undeniable that such physical skills as are required in musical performance come from training or

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[41] Morwenna Griffiths, "The Teaching of Skills and the Skills of Teaching: a reply to Robin Barrow" in Journal of Philosophy of Education Vol. 21. No. 2 1987.

practice. Anyone who has ever tried to play a muscial instrument with even minimal competence is only too aware of the unfortunate necessity of practice. Furthermore, musicians usually refer to the years of "training" their eventual proficency initially necessitated. The notion of "training" frequently conjures up authoritarian drill-like, disciplined manoeuvres, all of which notions seem to be strikingly at odds with music performance's claim to be in some sense a creative enterprise. Futhermore, training is often associated with a kind of "mindlessness"[42] i.e. with abilities that are at best only minimally involved with understanding[43] (e.g. a soldier's ability to slope arms). And while acknowledging that musical performance is indeed a skills based activity most performers would vehemently object to the notion of their activity being only "minimally involved with understanding," much less being "mindless." Indeed, if as has been suggested, the performer's task is to sound compositions in such a way as makes them aurally understandable, then to characterize the ability to sound compositions as relatively "mindless" seems peculiarly inappropriate.

I think, however, that the hesitation to ally training and creative freedom arises out of a number of factors. First, it arises out of a certain logical confusion between results and means. That the aim of performance teaching is the

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42 Gilbert Ryle, The Concept of Mind (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1949) p. 42.

43 Robin Barrow, "Skill Talk" op. cit.

achievement of some state of creative freedom does not and cannot entail that the methods employed to attain that desired result must themselves embrace free creativity.[44] For example, procuring a musical instrument for a child and thence allowing her total freedom to explore its creative musical possibilities will not ordinarily lead to her developing the skills necessary for competent, much less creative performance. Instead, at some point the child has to learn how to play the instrument which learning, be it self-taught or otherwise, inevitably involves practice, training and discipline. Indeed, as a glance at the musical education of many of the great performers reveals, creative talents far from being twarted, are instead frequently honed and developed through being subjected to a thoroughly disciplined training. Thus, in and of itself training would appear not to be antipathetic to performance art.

That "training" is not only not antipathetic to performance art but rather facilitates it, is demonstrated I think, by a careful more thorough analysis of the (physical) skills of musical performance. Indeed, I would suggest that a large part of the hesitation to ally training and creativity arises

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[44] As Ryle tellingly puts it: "There exists in some quarters the sentimental idea that the teacher who teaches his pupils how to do things is hindering them . . . We should think of the inculcation of methods rather as training the pupils to avoid specified muddles, blockages, sidetracks and thin ice . . . Enabling them to avoid troubles . . . is helping them to move where they want to move. Road signs are not, for the most part impedimetns to the flow of traffic. They are preventives of impediments to the flow of traffic", Gilbert Ryle, "Teaching and Training" in Collected Papers (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1971) p. 461.

out of a misconstrual of the former. And while this misconstrual is rendered somewhat understandable, given the highly complex nature of performance skills (of which, more later) it is nevertheless unfortunate for the disparagement of "training" inevitably leads to an uncritical exaltation and a dubious and often false notion of creative freedom.

In order to clarify this misconstrual, one must first make a distinction between what I shall call, two "aspects" of performance technique - a purely technical aspect and a craft like aspect[45] . And it is these two "aspects" of performance skill I will have in mind when I refer henceforth to "technical" skills and "craft" skills. My employment of this distinction is not an attempt to dichotomise performance technique into two kinds of skill. Rather, since (as will hopefully become obvious) both aspects involve an element of physicality, the distinction is one of degree.

The purely technical aspect of performance technique is predominantly concerned with physical dexterity, with acquiring and developing sufficent technical fluency as will enable us to play or sound, more or less accurately the notes of musical compositions. The type of "sounding" that is at issue here is not at all interpretive in that it does not seek to convey any understanding of the music. Rather it merely reproduces with some degree of ease and facility, somewhat like a well-trained typist, what is written on the musical score. To put it

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45 After Richard Smith, "Skills: the Middle Way", in Journal of Philosophy of Education, Vol 21. No. 2 1987.

another way, the type of playing that is at issue here is such as could be derogatorily described as "merely playing the notes" or "playing mechanically."

As with all or most complex practical activities, complex musical technical skills may, ordinarily, be reduced to a checklist of relatively simple and mindless ones. For example, analyzing technique, Liszt reduced all technical difficulties in piano music to a certain number of basic formulae[46] . And he argued that pianists who mastered these formulae would be equipped after making some adjustments, to play everything written for the instrument). Now, these simple, uncomplicated skills may be characterized as relatively low-level and mechanical for the following various reasons. First, technical/dexterous skills are relatively context free[47] in that they may be acquired in a mechanical fashion independently from the standard corpus of musical compositions and even, it has on occasion been suggested, away from actual musical instruments. For example, the historical annals of piano technique record an astonishing and often amusing array of mechanical devices and machines which were reputedly designed to further and promote technical excellence.[48] These

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46 Although Liszt did not leave any detailed exposition of his pianistic and pedagogical principles, he sometimes expressed his opinions in letters and his ideas found reflection in his pupils' writings. See Franz Liszt, Letters Edited by La Mara. Trans. by C. Bache. (London: H. Grevel and Co., 1984). Also for comments of the great musicians on technique, interpretation and related matters see George Kochevitsky, The Art of Piano Playing (Evanston: Summy-Birchard Company, 1967).

47 See Robin Barrow, "Skill Talk" op.cit.

48 See George Kochevitsky, The Art of Piano Playing, pp. 4-5.

often tortuous finger gymnastic implements purportedly enabled one to develop basic dexterous piano skills not only independently of standard piano repertoire, but even away from the piano itself. Furthermore, that such mechanical practice was openly recognized as relatively "mindless" may be seen in the admonitions of the inventor of one such device that "to avoid boredom, the pupil [should] read a book or newspaper in the course of his hours of finger exercises."[49] (Fortunately for today's students, mehanical devices such as these have largely fallen out of favour).

The context free nature of technical/dexterous skills may still, however, be seen, in the books of studies and exercises which even today constitute an integral aspect of acquiring performance technique.[50] These are explicitly designed to develop technical excellence through isolating and thence solving through carefully devised repetitive exercises all the technical problems that a performer is likely to encounter in musical compositions. And it is not at all inconceivable that, through focusing solely on studies and exercises such as these, one could develop absolute technical facility without ever playing or singing a standard musical work.[51]

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49 Friedrich Wilhelm Kalkbrenner whose hand-guide (1830) was a simplification of the "Chiroplast" invented by Johann Bernhard Logier and patented 1814. For descriptions of both devices see George Kochevitsky, The Art of Piano Playing op. cit.

50 All the different musical instruments have their own particular studies and exercises e.g. pianist frequently use Hanon exercies; singers employ Conconne studies; wind instrumentalists use Galpar and so on.

51 It is of course possible for composers to write technical studies which also quality as legitimate musical composition. Chopin's Twenty Four Etudes demonstrate this par excellence. However, in most cases,

Second, as was suggested above, technical skills are inculcated and perfected through "habituation" or drill-like repetition i.e. through playing countless studies or exercises which involve going through the same sequence of motions again and again until we can, so to speak, perform them automatically or "in our sleep."[52] The notion of doing a certain set of exercises over and over again until we can perform them automatically or "in our sleep" raises incontravertibly the pejorative spectre of "mindlessness." However, bearing our earlier distinction in mind, it is important to point out here, that since technical skills constitute only a part of performance technique, this charge of mindlessness properly accrues not to performance technique "per se" but to one particular aspect of it.

It is to this other aspect that we must now turn our attention. As has been suggested several times already, the performer's task is not just to "sound" musical compositions deftly and fluently but rather to sound them in a particular manner -- one that renders them aurally understandable. Craft skills are integrally involved in these (intelligible) types of sounding.

As directly given to the ear, musical sound sensation characteristically exhibits a rich, complex and highly subtle range of tonal properties or "colours" which (it has already

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technical studies are not admitted into the accepted mainstream of musical compositions. And it is these types of studies I am referring to here.

[52] Gilbert Ryle, The Concept of Mind op. cit. pp. 42-43.

been suggested) music notation, of its very nature, is unable to capture. Craft skills basically have to do with discerning and utilizing the interpretive potential of those subtle, tonal properties. The notion of subtle tonal inflection being purposely (or indeed unconsciously) used to convey and express "meaning" of one sort or another is not at all unfamiliar. For example, we typically employ vocal intonation i.e. tone of voice, to express and communicate our emotional states and feelings. Neither is tonal inflection unknown in specifically interpretive contexts. It is, for example, primarily through the skillful use of vocal intonation, through subtle variations in pitch, emphasis, delivery, volume, etc. that oral interpreters convey and express the meaning of literary works.[53] Similarly, I would argue, it is through the skillful use of tonal inflection i.e. through subtle nuances of duration, pitch, dynamics, timbre, etc. that musical interpreters disclose and thence communicate the intelligible and coherent workings of musical compositions.[54]

Succinctly, where technical skills enable performers to simply make or produce deftly and fluently the individual notes indicated on the musical score, craft skills enable them to manipulate, subtly shape or sculpt the tonal colours of those notes in such a way as unites them in coherent, comprehensible

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53 Posture, muscle tone and general platform presence also enter into the communication of meaning. However, since in oral interpretation these normally serve to support and sustain vocal inflection, I cite the latter as the "primary" means of conveying meaning.

54 Posture, muscle tone and general platform presence also serve to support and sustain musical tonal inflection.

successions, as makes the individual notes appear (aurally) to cohere, hang together or relate to one another as meaningful tonal events, i.e as motives, phrases, sections, etc.

It is now perhaps possible to see how craft skills relate to the communication of aural understanding. For if the latter consists of aurally perceiving various kinds of musical patterning and craft skills enable performers to sound notes in such a way as subtly illustrates and makes aurally apparent their relatedness to one another, then we may see that craft skills are indeed integrally involved in the transmission of aural understanding. Moreover, one may also see further reasons why listeners not infrequently experience musical compositions as highly expressive. For precisely because the subtle tonal inflections performers employ to illustrate and make aurally apparent the interrelatedness of musical tones are themselves highly evocative of the delicate vocal inflections we characteristically employ to express and communicate our emotional states and feelings, listeners not implausibly have yet another reason for experiencing musical structures as highly expressive. Indeed, one suspects it is the perceived similarity between vocal and tonal inflection that leads to craft skills sometimes being described and characterized in "expressive" terms.[55]

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55 It is noteworthy, for example, that musical instruments which permit and facilitate such tonal inflection (e.g. the clavichord) are frequently described as "expressive" instruments. It is also noteworthy that the opposite applies. Couperin, describing the harpsichord (an instrument incapable of such inflection) writes: "I shall be forever grateful to anyone who . . . succeeds in making this instrument capable of

But setting aside the issue of expressiveness, it is at this point more important to emphasize that like all highly refined skills, musical craft skills cannot be learned in the same way as purely technical skills - by playing scales, exercises etc. Rather, because they are expressly concerned with illustrating the interrelatedness of musical sounds, with portraying in sound sensation not individual, discrete sounds but rather motives, phrases sections etc., they may only be cultivated and mastered in connection with activities wherein one sounds out motives, phrases, sections etc., typically in connection with actual musical compositions.[56]

Furthermore, although like technical skills, craft skills are acquired and perfected through practice at the activity itself -- in this case typically through practicing musical compositions, nevertheless, they are acquired and perfected not so much by habituation or drill as by "training".

Now because training involves learning through "practice," through repeatedly doing what one is learning to do, it is often erroneously considered as syonymous with drill or habituation and thence with the "mindlessness" that accrues to the latter.

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expression . . . It seems a fruitless hope to the present time that soul can be given to the instrument". Francois Couperin, Preface a Pieces de Clavecin. Paris. 1713.

56 I say typically here because study-looks often include pieces specifically designed to teach such things as phrasing, cantabile sounding etc. However, although pieces of this sort are often included among dexterous-type studies, it is noteworty that they do not employ repetitive methods. Rather they employ long, extended melodies akin to those used in bona-fide musical compositions. Indeed, I have often thought that some of the better ones could be lifted out of the studies category and performed as musical compositions.

But although training characteristically involves drill (or drill-like manoeuvres) it is not reducible to the latter. This is perhaps best illustrated by a detailed description of the musical practice situation.

It will be assumed that the performer enters the practice situation with the general objective of "interpreting" -- achieving and thence facilitating aural understanding of a particular musical compositions. And it will be further assumed that she already possesses a greater or lesser amount of musical knowledge and know-how which will enable her to achieve this objective - i.e. she is able to play the instrument required, knows how to read the composer's score, has some idea of style, performance practice etc.

This knowledge sets the stage, as it were for the performers subsequent sounding interpretation, in that pertinent aspects of it, together with the performer's own imaginative musical ideas all generate an initial (and as yet tentative) aural understanding of the work under consideration, offer general clues as to how it might be appropriately and intelligibly sounded. Armed with these clues, the performer begins to sound out the work in question.

Now, especially at the earliest stages of practice(but indeed also at intervals throughout the overall practice period), the performer's listening plus her physical motor sensations[57] plus

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57 Generally speaking, fluent technical skillfulness "feels" easy, free and unencumbered. Consequently technical difficulties are frequently experienced (from the physical sensation point of view) as feelings of

her physical motor sensations may serve to make her cogently aware of technical inadequacies i.e. make her realize that a bar, phrase or passage requires a certain dexterity or fluency that as yet she does not possess and which effectively inhibits her efforts to interpret the piece.

Accordingly, she may isolate that bar, phrase or passage and having determined the basic, physical motions required to execute the latter with ease and facility, (for it will be remembered that complex technical skills ordinarily may be broken down into a checklist of simpler basic skills) she may set about attaining mastery of these motions through devising short, repetitive patterns or exercises which "drill" her to do the movements required. And , she may persist in this drill until such times as she is enabled to sound almost totally fluently and unhesitatingly the problematic bar, phrase or passage.[58]

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unease, discomfort, or even pain. Such sensations serve to make the preformer cogently aware that something is technically wrong.

[58] I say almost totally fluently and unhesitatingly here because many teachers of performance maintain that at a certain point near or close to perfect fluency, a precise and intense envisagement of a technically difficult passage will "complete the job" as it were - i.e. supply the extra minute adjustments needed to attain total facility. Where this occurs, craft skills and technical skills intertwine and it is virtually impossible to discern when one becomes the other. This is a far cry, however, from the more extreme versions of Ideo-Kinesis which achieved popularity during the sixties and which believed that all technical problems could be resolved musically; that one only has to "imagine the act as if already performed - and lo! it is done". Luigi Bonpensiere, New Pathways to Piano Technique (New York, Philosophical Library, 1953). P. 37. I believe such notions to be totally naive. For while it is often maintained that the presence of a precise and intense envisagement will help us to "fine tune" or adjust our technical skills in such a way as enables us to master a technically difficult passage, this still presupposes that we already possess a certain level of basic skillfulness. Furthermore it is not at all clear that all performing artists work with

Typically, however, because the performer's overall purpose is not just to play the piece fluently but rathr to "interpret" it, according as her technical facility increases, so too does her desire to shape her sounding in such a way as facilitates aural understanding. But now her listening -- her experience of actual sound sensation, does more than simply alert her to technical inadequacies, it makes her cogently aware of "expressive possibilities," of the potential interpretive contribution of a whole variety of subtle nuances and intonations which neither musical scores nor performance traditions could possibly take into account.

These supplement or "flesh out" her initial, tentative aural understanding. They challenge or call into question certain aspects of it; they endorse or confirm others. And anxious to explore further the interpretive possibilities offered, the performer sounds out the motive, phrase or passage again. Once more, however, the actual experience of sound sensation prompts a further critical assessment of interpretive possibilities, a rejection of some tonal properties as inappropriate, a selection and endorsement of others as eminently susceptible of aural understanding. So the process continues indefinitely, the composition ultimately being realized through a kind of ongoing, critical yet creative exploration, wherein each successive sounding leads to a

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such envisagements. Rather some do, some don't. The importance of mental envisagements in skills - based activities may be somewhat exaggerated. See John Passmore, "Cultivating Imagination" in The Philosophy of Teaching (London: Duckworth, 1980).

progressive selection and refinement of interpretive possibilities.

Now, all of the above comes into being as a result of the performer's sense of hearing. It is her listening to each successive sounding which prompts her examination and questioning of interpretive sounding possibilities which process eventually leads to her working out and conveying aural understanding.[59] And it is undeniable that the examining and questioning which listening generates manifestly involves thought. It involves pondering, deliberating, reflecting upon i.e. "thinking about" interpretive possibilities and wondering whether or not they are cogent.

However, although ordinarily we associate thinking with words -- with "saying" things to ourselves[60] -- because music employs a different set of symbols, e.g. notes, musical thinking cannot really be characterized in linguistic terms. Instead, it more frequently takes the form of voicing or sub-voicing "notes"[61] i.e. of humming aloud or to oneself, running through one's head or on a musical instrument, various experimental renditions of notes or note sequences. And although no words are employed in situations such as these, in considering, be it silently or otherwise, (i.e. in listening inwardly or outwardly

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59 It is hardly surprising then to find listening frequently cited as an essential and crucial aspect of performance art. Lizst, for example, thought that the first task of a musician was to learn to listen. See George Kochevitsky op. cit.

60 Paul H. Hirst "Language and Thought" in Knowledge and the Curriculum. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974).

61 Gilbert Ryle "The Thinking of Thoughts: What is 'Le Penseur' Doing?" in Collected Papers op. cit.

to), various alternative ways in which a musical phrase might be intelligibly sounded - in engaging in the type of practice process described earlier - the performer may justifiably be described as "thinking out" her interpretation of the musical composition.

But it is crucially important to emphasize that the type of thinking at issue here is neither random nor aimless. That is to say, the performer does not work out her interpretation of a piece by idly running through her head or on a musical instrument various renditions of the musical phrases, and thence arbitrarily, or on the basis of unschooled hunch or intuition, picking out one as the most appropriate.

On the contrary (and this is where the notion of training enters the picture), performers ordinarily are schooled or trained to conduct their practicing i.e. their musical thinking in a certain "proper," searching, tentative and critical manner. They are taught "modi operandi," disciplined ways of working/practising which incorporate a vast storehouse of techniques, canons, proceedures, knacks and even tricks of the trade[62] which enable them to avoid muddles, sidetracks and wasted efforts, etc. and to work out interpretations that are valid, viable and legitimate.

Typically, performers learn or acquire these disciplined way of working/practising, these knacks, canons of proceedure, etc. through "monitored doing" - through themselves engaging in

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62 Gilbert Ryle "Teaching and Training" in Collected Papers, op. cit.

the type of musical thinking process cited above but having their efforts commented on -- i.e. corrected or critically evaluated by teacher-performers who have mastered the art of interpretation and who are willing to guide and help others in their efforts to do likewise.

This guidance or critical evaluation may take many different forms. Sometimes very little, sometimes a lot can be told; there is much moreover that cannot be told but can be shown by example, by caricature and so on.[63] Succinctly, performers ordinarily learn the knacks, canons of procedure, etc. by practice, coaching and imitation[64].

Among these, coaching, or what Passmore aptly calls "exhortation,"[65] is vitally important for it teaches the would be performer to conceive of her task in certain appropriate ways and to act (play or sing) accordingly. For example, a master-performer may advise or counsel students that interpretation involves more than technical display, more than merely playing the notes; may warn or caution them as to the seductive, egotistical satisfactions of superficial virtuosity; may reproach or admonish them for succumbing to those egotistical satisfactions, may exhort or harangue them to do better in the future.

But, and this is crucially important, although in initially learning how to work out interpretations, performers may rely

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63 Ibid.,

64 Ibid.,

65 John Passmore "Developing Capacities" in The Philosophy of Teaching op. cit.

on the admonitions and critical, guidance of master teachers, gradually they begin personally to internalize those critical, guidance proceedures until eventually they can, critically evaluate their own efforts. Now it is they who admonish themselves for carelessness, lack of thought, self-indulgent egotistical virtuosity and so on. Their thinking is controlled in high or low degree by a wide range of quite specific scruples.[66] It embodies an element of self-correction. In short, their working with master-performers engenders the development of a kind of interpreter's conscience, i.e. some contempt for shoddy, cheap, shallow interpretive work, some self-recrimination for mistakes and omissions.

It is now perhaps possible to see why training performers to interpret musical compostions cannot be envisaged in terms of mindless drill. For that which the performer seeks to achieve, the development and communication of aural understanding is not present to her as a changeless, complete, determinate and given end or objective towards which means (i.e. craft skills) have to be devised and thence practised (i.e. "drilled") to the point of total mastery.

On the contrary, the practice process which engenders musical interpretations may be characterized not as "mindless drill" but rather as "mindful reflection," as a type of thinking process. And it is through such careful, canonical, high-principled and critical thinking/practice that that which the performer seeks

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66 Gilbert Ryle, "A Rational Animal" in Collected Papers op. cit.

to achieve (the interpretation of musical works) gradually evolves and takes shape over a period of time.

The disciplined manoeuvres, thus, that we often negatively associate with training pertain not to the practice/drill of particular interpretations but rather to the process of interpretation itself, to the working out/practice of interpretations in general. Their purpose is to sharpen, hone, develop and make more alert and effective the performer's own thinking processes through inclining her to conduct her thinking in a certain proper and appropriate manner[67]. They encourage her to take into consideration not uncritically but rather in a searching, probing questioning manner all the interpretive clues at her disposal, (e.g. the directives of the composer in the musical score, the tenets of performance traditions, the pertinent suggestions of critic theorists, the subtle interpretive possibilities of tonal properties, her own imaginative ideas and so on) and using those clues wisely and well to come up with interpretive soundings that vividly and aptly illustrate in sound sensation the intelligible and coherent structures of musical compostions.

Now, the internal goods of musical interpretation consist basically in: (a) the excellent original interpretations that come into being as a result of performers doing all of the above, as a result of their developing and utilizing "creatively"

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67 Gilbert Ryle, for example, describes capacities or abilities (such as the ability to interpret musical compositions) as "dispositions" i.e. behaviour patterns. The Concept of Mind, op. cit. Chapter V.

the skills, modes of reasoning, judgement etc. passed on through performance traditions. Such original interpretations sustain and extend the latter by approximating the ideals of excellence contained therein. Internal goods also consist in (b) the satisfaction performers derive thereof. And it is here in connection with performers "responsibly" and "conscientiously" doing all of the above (and deriving satisfaction thereof), that the notion of virtue enters the picture. For manifestly, developing and utilizing the appropriate skills, modes of reasoning, judgement etc. entails concomitantly developing and putting into practice the virtuous attitudes and dispositions mentioned earlier in the first chapter.

But I would argue, tentatively as yet, that interpretive success of the internal kind and the satisfaction derived thereof comes, if it comes at all, only as a result of performers cultivating and exercising besides these more well-known virtues, a further crucially important human quality -- that of "authenticity." And it is to this complex virtue and its ramifications for musical performance that we must now turn our attention.

## CHAPTER III

### Authenticity: A Virtue of Musical Performance

Before going on to examine specifically the notion of authenticity I must first say something about how I understand the notion of virtue. After Aristotle, I would argue that virtue (e.g. the virtue of courage), is a matter of character, a firm disposition to want to act and to act virtuously (e.g. courageously). So too by extrapolation, to speak of the virtue of authenticity is to speak of a firm dispositon to want to act and to act "authentically".

What is it to act authentically? Here, in order to prevent one possible misunderstanding, I must immediately introduce an important caveat. The type of "authenticity" I shall be discussing in this chapter is not the kind usually associated with music or more specifically with the interpretation and performance of "old" music on original instruments or their copies. That notion of authenticity focusing as it does on historial modes and conventions of performance is most aptly termed "historical" authenticity. And when I wish to refer specifically to it, I shall use the prefix "historical." Instead, the type of authenticity I shall be discussing is the one typically associated with (continental) philosophy and whcih refers primarily to people (e.g. to interpreters) to their lives, their personal beliefs, values,

attitudes, commitments etc. From now on when I use the general (unprefixed) term "authentic", it will be the philosophical notion and not the musical historical version that I will have in mind.

What then is (personal) authenticity? Or to be somewhat more precise, what is an authentic belief, feeling, action, etc? One immediately encounters problems here for authenticity is not only an extremely complex concept, it is also an extremely controversial notion, one which has gathered around itself a moral slang or jargon, the existence and pervasive influence of which serves to make the already ambiguous concept all the more obscure and difficult to handle. Perhaps the best way to proceed is to consider first the virtue with which authenticity is historically connected and thence to work our way into a more pertinent consideration of authenticity itself.

Authenticity is characteristically associated with the virtue of sincerity[1]. Now a sincere belief or feeling is one that is honestly and truly held or felt by the person in question. To believe in God sincerely, for example, is "really" -- in actuality as well as in outward appearance -- to believe in him. Similarly, a sincere expression of grief is one wherein someone not only exhibits the behaviour we ordinarily associate with profound sadness but also wherein they actually "feel" profoundly sad. In both of these cases, no guile, hypocrisy or

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[1] See Lionel Trilling, Sincerity and Authenticity (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972).

dishonesty is involved. The belief is "real," the feeling is "heart felt," hence their characterization as "true," "honest," "sincere".

Now these essential characterizations of sincerity -- truthfulness and honesty -- are retained in the more complex notion of authenticity. But rather than speaking of holding beliefs, attitudes or values "sincerely," authenticity instead speaks of holding beliefs, attitudes, values, etc. that are "truly one's own." In other words, underlying the whole notion of authenticity is the idea of being true or faithful to oneself, that one's beliefs, values, actions etc are in some sense an expression of one's true and honest self. In short, authenticity requires what Bonnett has called "a certain pregnant sense of own."[2] It is accordingly to this pregnant sense of ownership of actions, beliefs, values, etc. that I now propose to turn my attention.

As a possessive adjective, "own" ordinarily conjures up notions of individuality and privacy. To have a room of one's own, for example, is to have a particular space set aside for one's own individual, personal, private use. So too, one might conjecture a belief of one's own as one that is personal, private and individual as opposed to one that is impersonal, public and general. However, common sense and minimum reflection tell us that most if not all of our beliefs, attitudes, values, etc. more likely answer to the latter description than to the former. For it is simply irrefutable that we characterisically acquire our

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[2] Michael Bonnett, "Authenticity and Education" in Journal of Philosophy of Education, Vol 12. 1978, p. 54.

beliefs, values, attitudes, etc. (or ones from which they derive) from external, public, impersonal sources, i.e. from cultural inheritance, upbringing, training, hearsay, received opinion, everyday chatter, etc.

Furthermore, typically we do not even consciously choose those impersonal beliefs and values. Rather we slip into them unreflectively or even unwillingly i.e. find ourselves as a result of training, upbringing, social environment, etc. sharing the beliefs and values of a particular group or community. And one suspects that were we to live in a radically different society, we would find ourselves embracing and no less sincerely subscribing to a very different set of beliefs and values.

Now, none of this bodes well for the notion of "authenticity." On the contrary, it suggests that the latter is somewhat of a pipe-dream and that people are in fact much less individual and much more standardized than they would probably care to admit. And here indeed we come to the heart of the matter. For it was precisely recognition of this fact i.e. the perception that modern society breeds people that are "standardized" - whose beliefs, values, etc. are not so much a genuine expression of their true and honest selves as rather an expression of the overwhelming pressure of social norms, stereotypes and others expectations - that first led Rousseau and Wordsworth to express fear for that "sentiment of being"

which they saw threatened and corrupted by modern society.[3] And it is essentially that self-same recognition that at various times and places during this century has led (in Cooper's words) to the search for authenticity attaining well nigh "epidemic proportions."[4]

What is this "sentiment of being" that Wordsworth and Rousseau so worried about? And how does it relate to authenticity?

Notions of "being" inevitably suggest Heidegger. For Heidegger, human being is such that "in its being its being is in question."[5] What this highly abstruse statement suggests basically is that one's being (as a "human" being) is an open question -- a matter to be decided by oneself. Human being has in itself no specific, fixed qualities, no predetermined life styles, values or goals. Rather these are constantly created by human being. And precisely because they are created, (because man is "self-legislating" and "self-creating"[6] ), the question arises inescapably for human being what kind of being it is going to realize. In other words it is up to it which styles of life it embraces, which goals it sets itself, which values it espouses. In short, to be human is to have a range of possibilities open to one. (In more Sartrian terms to be human

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3 See Trilling, op. cit. Chapter 4.

4 David E. Cooper, Authenticity and Learning (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983) p. 6.

5 Heidegger, Sein Und Zeit 42. quoted and translated by Charles Taylor in "Responsiblity for Self". Gary Watson (ed.) Free Will (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

6 Nietzsche, quoted in Cooper, Authenticity and Learning op. cit. p. 14.

is to have free choices.)[7] And it is this openness or potential for free choice which distinguishes human being from other creatures.

Now it is important not to interpret the foregoing statements as suggesting that human being has free, "unlimited" choices. Neither Heidegger nor Sartre is suggesting that human beings are omnipotent. Quite the contrary, they posit it as an essential characteristic of human being that it finds itself surrounded by "givens," factors which are not of its choosing and which limit the choices available to it.[8] In popular existentialist phraseology man finds himself "abandoned" or "thrown" into a particular world, time and social environment, born of these parents, with this body, facing responsibilities and expectations thrust on him by his station in life. All of these things are "facts" or circumstances about which he has no choices. And all of them restrict the range of possiblilities "open" to him. But (and herein we see the existentialist notion of freedom entering the picture), although facts and circumstances such as these are indeed always determined or "given" to one, the way one reacts or responds to those "givens" is not at all determined. Instead as

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[7] Sartre, Being and Nothingness translated by H. Barnes. (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1956).

[8] I am referring to Heidegger's notion of "Facticity" which notion was lifted by Sartre for whom it also becomes a basic structure of being human. See Heidegger Sein Und Zeit translated by Macquarrie and Robinson, (New York: Harper and Row, 1962.) Sartre, Being and Nothingness op. cit. And for a perceptive and illuminating comparison of the two works see Robert C. Solomon, From Rationalism to Existentialism (New York: Humanities Press, 1972). Chapters 6 and 7.

a "human" being one is always free to formulate one's own attitudes and projects concerning those "givens."

This is perhaps best explicated with an example. Accordingly, let us assume the following scenario: a young person entering high school finds herself living in middle-class, twentieth century, Catholic Ireland, with a particular (female) body, with traits inherited from particular parents, and with emotional idiosyncracies, strengths and talents partially determined by her early childhood. All of these factors thrust responsibilities and expectations on her. They suggest or anticipate, for example, that she will pursue a certain kind of education (one that will develop her talents), will eventually go on to University and thereafter enter a suitable profession, will marry and bear children and so forth.

But, (and herein lies the crux of the matter), although factors such as those mentioned above do indeed foist expectations and responsibilities on the young person, they do not and cannot compel her to embrace or endorse them. Instead of developing her obvious musical talents, for example, and adopting as one of her ultimate (and anticipated) goals the notion of becoming a concert violinist, the young person may instead choose to become a medical doctor. Or, she might choose to leave school altogether and become a drop-out.

In other words as a "human" being she can, in thought, stand back from her on-going world and evaluate the

expectations and responsibilities thrust on her.[9] She can raise the question: Do I really want to be what I now am, someone headed towards being a concert violinist? No less important, she can envision and evaluate possibilities for modifying those expectations and responsibilities. She can ask herself: do I want to be something else, someone headed towards being a medical doctor? Do I want to be anything at all?

Furthermore, her ultimate choice of goals or ends will determine her view of certain aspects of her situation. If she embraces, as anticipated, the goal of concert violinist, then she will likely evaluate one aspect of her situation -- the amount of time erstwhile spent practicing the violin as progress towards self-fulfillment. If, on the other hand, she embraces the goal of medical doctor, then she may see the time spent on practicing as time wasted, as time much better spent studying subjects related to medicine and therefore as impeding her progress towards self-fulfillment. If finally she embraces the goal of drop-out, then she may see the time spent on practicing as a total waste and a massive infringement on her personal liberties.

Now in the above case, all of the evaluations are of the same "situation" -- the time spent on practising the violin. But our young person as a "human" being is not compelled to adopt any one. Indeed, and this is crucially important, she is not so compelled even were the situation to be "experienced" as

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[9] See Taylor, "Responsibility for Self" op.cit.

offering no actual choice. Were the young person to be forcibly detained in a boarding school wherein her musical talents were emphasized and coercively developed, she would still be "free" to view the entire enterprise in the manner of either of the earlier interpretations. And no amount of physical coercion could force her to change her view.

In summary, for human being, there is always, albeit often only formally, the possibility of choice. That is to say, we can always envision further possibilities, always conceive of alternative life-styles, alternative goals, alternative values. Hence Heidegger's and Sartre's insistence that "man is his possibility," "man is freedom."[10]

But human being is possibility ( is freedom) not only because it "has" freedom of choice ("has" a range of possibilities open to it), it "is" its possibilities ("is" freedom) moreover in that ultimately it and it alone is accountable for the values, life-styles, goals and so forth it espouses. In other words (and since much of the rest of this chapter will be spent explicating this claim, I shall merely state it here), of central importance to Heidegger and Sartre (as well as to Kierkegaard and Nietzsche) is the notion of there being no *a priori* grounds for making one choice over another,[11] nothing to "justify" our adopting this or that value, or particular scale of values. Rather there is only our own decisions and choices. And precisely because there is

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10 Heidegger, Sein Und Zeit op. cit p. 42. Sartre, Being and Nothingness op. cit. p. 439.

11 See Solomon, From Rationalism to Existentialism op. cit. pp. 210-213.

only our own decisions and choices, precisely because we are as human beings free from divine, moral, rational or naturalistic impositions of values, goals, etc., and are instead free to formulate our own, it follows that we and we alone are responsible for those formulations.

And now we may begin to discern more fully what it means to act authentically. For if the latter means to act in a manner that is true or faithful to oneself, and "oneself" is a self-creating, self-legislating being, then to act authentically is to act in a manner that is true to oneself as such a being. It is to act in full awareness of the possibilities open to one. It is to live in a way that fully acknowledges one's ultimate responsibility with regard to the values, goals, lifestyles and so forth one embraces.

And this is where the central complaint of Rousseau, Wordsworth and others enters the picture: people are typically extremely reluctant to live thus. Instead they behave as though custom or tradition entirely circumscribed them and they have no option but to accept passively the anonymous roles in which they were raised or which were otherwise thrust on them; no choice but to accept and act in accordance with the beliefs, values, lifestyles and so forth, they inherit or see exhibited all around them.

Neither is it entirely incomprehensible that people behave thus. For there is much in modern society to foster such a passive response. Long years of religious tradition, the vested interest of certain power groups in society in promoting

passive acceptance of the "status quo," the pressure of advertising, the mass media, various types of upbringing and education systems which intentionally or unintentionally reflect some or all of the above, all of these foster the illusion that established, traditional roles, beliefs, values and so forth are "sacrosanct," "natural" -- in either case that they are beyond question and that therefore we have no option but to go along with them.

But people are fundamentally mistaken or self-deceived in this assumption. And to deny that one has possibilities, to deceive oneself into thinking that one is "thinglike," determined by such things as social roles, personality traits and habits, conventional laws and principles and that therefore one cannot be held accountable for one's attitudes and actions, is to live in the way of "bad faith."[12] It is to forget or to try to ignore that one is a self-creating, self-legislating being. It is to live and act inauthentically.

By contrast, to live and act authentically is constantly to remember that one is such a being. It is to live in full awareness of the fact that one's goals, values, projects and so forth are ultimately one's own creation. It is to fully acknowledge one's responsibility in this respect.

But now one may reasonably ask: how are we to understand this responsibility? In what sense are our values, goals, lifestyles and so forth to be our own creation? What is

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[12] Sartre, Being and Nothingness op.cit. Part I Chapter 2.

involved in the notion of creating one's own values, goals, lifestyles and so forth? For Sartre, creation of one's own values, goals, etc. is to be understood in terms of choice. "Authenticity," says Sartre, "is a self-recovery of being which was previously corrupted through bad faith."[13] The first step towards recovery is to reject all of the values, attitudes, lifestyles and so forth we have passively fallen into; and having rejected them, the second step is actively and consciously to choose thereafter what we ourselves as free-thinking beings decide to value, believe, undertake, etc.

In order to ensure that our choosing anew does not reflect consciously or unconsciously any rational, divine, moral or naturalistic coercion, Sartre insists that we make our choices in a totally free ungrounded manner constrained neither by our individual pasts, nor by prevailing standards of logic, evidence or common sense. Since, it is argued, the beliefs, values, etc. thereby selected originate in an individual, conscious, totally and uncorrupted act of will, we may claim them as truly our own and so deem them irrefutably authentic.

Now it will be noticed that on this account, choice is depicted purely in terms of spontaneous acts of will. And herein exactly lies the problem. For it may be argued against Sartre that this radically underplays the motivational aspect of our selections.[14] For where Sartre seems to imply that only a

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13 Ibid., quoted in Cooper, Authenticity and Learning, op. cit. p.11.

14 See Merleau Ponty, The Phenomenology of Perception translated Colin Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962). Part 3, Chapter 3.

decision is necessary to set up and sustain an existential goal or project, it is reasonably argued that there is more to commitment and action than this. There is characteristically some motivating factor, some initial affinity for the project, some sense that it is worth pursuing, which inclines one in that direction and which lends support and force to one's decision. On Sartre's account no such support is mentioned. Instead, decision is somehow taken to have its own force.

And here Sartre's account of choice begins to look suspiciously like something else. For if nothing is to shape, structure or give direction to the will and the latter is all that is required to set up and sustain an existential project, are we speaking of choice or rather of arbitrary fiat? And if we are, what happens to Sartre's much vaunted freedom? Does it in fact amount to a free for all?

Implying exactly that, Merleau-Ponty argues that "freedom must be buttressed by being" else choice amounts to chaos.[15] Most precisely, although motivation is never a determinant of choosing a particular course of action, it must nevertheless be a factor in our decisions to act, otherwise choice and deliberation are reduced to anarchy. It will be gathered from this that Merleau-Ponty construes being in terms of some sort of motivational structure. In this his thinking reflects Heidegger.

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15 Ibid., quoted in Michael Bonnett, "Authenticity, Autonomy and Compulsory Curriculum" in The Cambridge Journal of Education Vol.6 No3.

For Heidegger, human being (i.e. human "consciousness") is cast in the form of care or concern[16]. As it develops, this consciousness, this primeval concern, evolves into a "depth structure" of over-arching interests (i.e. concerns), purposings, aspirings, intendings and so forth.[17] These provide the motive force which propel human beings into the future in that they incline us towards certain things - e.g it is her being interested in becoming a medical doctor that prompts our young person's commitment to that effect.

But interest, purposings, aspirings and so forth imply not only that one is attracted towards certain things, they also imply that one ascribes a certain value to those attractions - e.g. to aspire to be a medical doctor is not only to want to be one, it is also to deem it a worthy, fulfilling way of life. Just so our motivational structures of over-arching interests, purposings and so forth do more than simply incline us towards certain things, they give meaning to our lives by ascribing a value to those inclinations, classifying them in such categories as higher or lower, virtuous or vicious, more or less

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16 Heidegger, Sein Und Zeit op. cit. pp66-67. Care and concern in Heidegger, play much the same role as "intentionality" in the philosophy of Husserl, but with a new emphasis on the more practical and non-cognitive acts which were neglected by Husserl. "Intentionality" in this case includes "one's active purposes, interests, designs, projects, aspirations, motives i.e. whatsoever is intentional in the sense of involving direction upon an object with a certain intent or mindedness which is constitutive of, or has implication for, action." And "in so far as one considers emotions and moods to be of this character, these, too would be included." See Bonnett, Authenticity, Autonomy and Compulsory Curriculum" op. cit. Also Solomon, From Rationalism to Existentialism op.cit. pp. 203-210.

17 See Bonnett, "Authenticity, Autonomy and Compulsory Curriculum" op. cit. pp. 114-116.

fulfilling, more or less important, etc.; judging them as expressing and sustaining qualitatively different modes of life. It is on the basis of such "strong evaluations"[18] that we are enabled to choose rather than merely plump for particular goals, styles of life, etc. - e.g. it is her evaluating medicine as more fulfilling than music that prompts our young person to opt for the career of medical doctor rather than that of concert violinist.

And here, in the notion of choices issuing from one's motiviational structure of over-arching interests, purposings, aspirings, etc., one may begin to glean how a particular choice might be described as "owned." For interests and aspirations are not the sorts of things we can just decide to have. Rather they are things we simply find ourselves having. Indeed, because very often our interests coincide with individual strengths and talents (e.g. because an interest in mathematics often coincides with some ability in that area) one suspects that they have sort of genetic dimension. And if that indeed is the case and our motivational structures have (as Bonnett maintains)[19] a genetic dimension, then the choices and actions they initiate may indeed be described as "owned" in some pertinent sense. And the requirement for the authenticity of a person's actions is not that they issue from her spontaneous choices as rather that they issue from her personal

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18 See Taylor "Responsibility for Self" op. cit. P. 112.

19 Bonnett, "Authenticity, Autonomy and Compulsory Schooling" op.cit. p. 115.

motivational structure -- from what Bonnett aptly terms her "constitutive self."[20]

And now it may be possible to understand how there are no a priori grounds for our choices and why instead there is only a human being's own decisions and choices. For if interests are not the sort of thing we can decide to have but rather are things we simply find ourselves having then nothing justifies our being interested in a particular activity, nothing justifies our evaluating the mode of life it sustains and expresses as worthy, or higher, or less fulfilling and so forth. Rather, "we" simply evaluate it thus.

Neither is this in any way senseless or unusual. Not infrequently what are considered to be "legitimate" interests run directly counter to so called "rational" interests. A rock climber, for example, may freely concede that there are many good reasons for her not engaging in rock climbing. She may agree that it is highly dangerous, may even describe it as an insane activity. Yet those good reasons notwithstanding she may state completely intelligibly that she finds it immensely challenging and worthwhile.

However, in order to forestall any notion of our choices being "determined" by our constitutive selves, it must be stressed here that the evaluations which issue from our motiviational structures (and on the basis of which one is enabled to choose rather than merely plump for particular

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[20] Ibid. pp. 114-116.

goals, projects, etc.) are not definitive, incontravertible pronouncements as to what constitutes a higher or lower mode of life, a worthy or unworthy undertaking, etc. Rather, our evaluations are, in Charles Taylor's aptly chosen words, "articulations of our sense of what is worthy, or higher, or more fulfilling and so forth."[21]

Now, to have a sense or idea of something is to have an essentially accurate but nevertheless highly incomplete or hazy notion of it. To have a sense of what it is like to be a doctor is to have some general notion of what is involved, one which falls far short, however, of knowing what it is really like. Just so, to have a sense or idea of what is fulfilling or worthy, or higher, or more integrated and so forth is to have only a hazy, incomplete notion of it, one which falls far short of knowing it fully. It is our responsibility as self-creating beings to complete and clarify that initial unstructured sense; it is up to us to formulate it in more specific, concrete terms. And our evaluations represent our attempts to do exactly that.

Precisely because, however, our initial sense while accurate is nevertheless hazy and incomplete, no one formulation can ever be said fully and satisfactorily to articulate it. Instead, there is always room for another articulation. Our evaluations are, in short, always open to challenge. Moreover, in seeking to complete and clarify our

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21 Taylor, op. cit. p. 122. As Bonnett puts it, the references of one's intentional structures "can only give a certain profile on the 'real' object" Bonnett, "Authenticity and Education" op. cit. p. 57.

sense of what is worthy, or higher, or more integrated and so forth we can all too easily fall into error. Most precisely, we can fail to respect our "givens" -- those facts about our nature and situation which are not of our choosing but which limit the options available to us. And failing to respect them we can set up goals and projects that are inauthentic rather than authentic.

We may, for example, try to repress or ignore certain "givens" - e.g. our young person may indeed be attracted towards music but she may deny that attraction because music (and indeed concentrated study of any kind) is not approved by the peer group she currently hangs round with. Or in opting for a career in medicine, she may choose to ignore the fact that she characteristically is sickened at the sight of blood, a factor which makes medicine a less than likely career option for her. And fantasizing instead about the worthiness of saving lives in Third World countries she may delude herself that medicine represents the ultimate, most fulfilling career for her.

Now in both of these cases our young person is refusing to submit to the relevance of facts which cannot be wished away. In other words she is essentially being dishonest. And being thus dishonest she is setting up goals and projects which are inauthentic, which are not an expression of her "true" self. Indeed as her fantasizing about saving lives in the Third World illustrates, erroneous articulations not infrequently involve a distortion of reality. Hence one may charcterize the goals and

projects set up not only as inauthentic but also as unrealistic. One may speak not just of error but of illusion or delusion.[22]

And now one may begin to see yet another reason for our evaluations always being open to challenge. For any of our articulations may involve repressions and distortions of the sort mentioned above. And that being the case, the question can always arise whether one is sure that one has "truly" determined what is higher or more fulfilling and so forth. And the injunction is always in place to look again. In short, as before, another articulation is always possible. As Taylor tellingly puts it: "it is just because all formulations are potentially under suspicion of distorting their objects that we have to see them all as revisable, that we are forced back as it were, to the inarticulate limits from which they originate."[23]

How then can such re-evaluations be carried on? Indeed, how do we formulate our evaluations in the first place? Are we condemned to live our lives in an agony of confusion and self-doubt? We do not start from nothing. Rather our articulations always take the form of modification of already established formulations - i.e. are always in effect "reevaluations." We start with those articulations that have been foisted on us by cultural inheritance, upbringing, early training, hearsay, received opinion and so forth. But, and this is crucially important, we do not just accept them as they are.

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22 See Taylor, op. cit. p. 123.

23 Ibid., p. 124.

Rather we look at what they are meant to articulate in a "stance of openness,"[24] where we are ready to recognize and endorse any subtle or profound shifts of emphasis that strike us as significant, any new ways in which to see our situation that might come our way in inspiration. Neither do we rest here. Rather we recognize that those new articulations are themselves always open to question. And so the cycle continues.

And now it may be possible to see why human-beings are characterized as self-creating. For we are talking essentially here of creative insight -- the ability to see reality afresh and form more adequate categories to describe it. In being forced back as it were, to the inarticulate limit from which our articulations originate, we are in effect being forced back to tap our own unique, creative resources. We are being obliged essentially to open ourselves, use all of our deepest unstructured sense of things in order to come to a new clarity.[25]

And now as well one may gain further insight into the notion of there being no *a priori* grounds for our choices. For in looking again at our evaluations, striving to avoid self-deception and envisioning and perhaps opting for alternatives we have nothing to rely on but our own inchoate sense of what is fitting, worthy, higher and so forth. And this being the case we and we alone are responsible for the choices we make. We

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24 Ibid., p. 125.
25 Ibid., p. 125.

and we alone are accountable for the decisions we choose to honour.

Now this "stance of openness" is very difficult. As Taylor observes "there is not only the difficulty of such concentration and the pain of uncertainty, but also all the distortion and repressions which make us want to turn away from this examination; and which make us resist change."[26] It is in fact much easier to take up the formulations that were initially foisted on one, and live within them without too much probing; hence, human beings' tendency to do exactly that. But to live outside them is not necessarily to condemn oneself to a life of confusion and self-doubt (although one may, of course, evaluate it thus). Rather, it is in Nietzschean terms to "live one's life as a work of art."[27] It is to view one's life as an "artistic creation." It is to see oneself as creator.

And herein we may at last begin to discern why the virtue of authenticity is essential to the art of music in performance. Authenticity makes possible creativity in musical interpretation. It prevents those practical principles which performers inherit from musical tradition, and the application of which enables them to shape and structure

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26 Ibid., p. 126.

27 It is perhaps important to mention that the kind of artistic creation Nietzsche has in mind in making this statement is far removed from a Dadaist type "free creation" wherein previous standards and conventions are simply overthrown or abandoned. Rather he had in mind one wherein traditional standards and conventions are revered and cherished yet at the same time never allowed to become a deadweight that drags people below that level of vision at which new possibilities are visible. See Cooper, Authenticity and Learning op. cit. Also Solomon From Rationalism to Existentialism op. cit. chaper 4.

musical sounds in such a way as promotes aural understanding, from becoming a deadweight that drags interpreters below that level of vision at which new possibilities are (aurally) conceivable. It is the performer's task to "re-evaluate" those inherited principles -- to look at (or rather listen to) what they are meant to accomplish in a stance of openness, where they (performers) are ready to recognize and endorse any subtle or profound shifts of tonal emphasis which strike them as significant, any quite new ways of promoting aural understanding which come their way in inspiration.

Now in realizing musical scores, in formulating in sound sensation subtly or profoundly different ways of promoting aural understanding, performers are no less subject to the kind of distortions and repressions cited above. They too may fail to respect their "givens." Unequal to the exacting technical demands of a particular composition, a performer may ignore the explicit and implicit directions given in the score and may self-deceivingly come up with an "innovative sounding" that just happens (conveniently) to be within her technical capabilites. Or, the reverse of this, a performer may take a simple compostion (e.g. an early piano concerto of Mozart) and may turn it into a virtuoso showpiece in order to show off her formidable, technical abilities.

In both of these cases a measure of artistic dishonesty is involved. And because all of their interpretations are potentially subject to such dishonesty, the onus is always on interpreters to challenge their own interpretations. It is their

responsibility to ask: does this mode of sounding truly promote aural understanding or am I rationalizing that it does in order to cover up some technical deficiencies on my part? Am I being true to the spirit of the piece or am I using it to further some egotistical ends of my own?

And here we come to the heart of the matter. For all of these questions presuppose that the interpreter "cares" about the music - i.e. is genuinely concerned with promoting aural understanding, derives meaning or satisfaction from so doing. In other words, the internal goods of music in performance -- the ongoing formulation of excellent interpretations and the inherent satisfactions performers derive thereof -- presuppose performers being authentically engaged in the business of musical interpretation. Music in performance requires the cultivation and exercise of the virtue of authenticity.

## CHAPTER IV

### Historical Authenticity: A Vice of Musical Performance?

In the last chapter, "authenticity" was outlined as a central virtue of music in performance. It was argued that because musical scores are too schematic to determine exactly how they are to be realized in sound sensation, the ultimate responsibility for how a piece is actually sounded rests with the performer. It is her task to figure out from among the available choices, a concrete sounding that will aptly and eloquently facilitate aural understanding (and thereafter appreciation) of particular musical works. And she and she alone is accountable for the realization she presents.

Neither was the performer's task presented as a straightforward error-free enterprise. On the contrary it was suggested that in realizing musical scores, performers can all too easily fall into error. Most precisely they can fail to respect their "givens" e.g. the inherent character of the music given in the score, and can play compositions in such a manner as is less concerned with promoting aural understanding as rather with showing off their formidable technical powers, or venting in a shallow, sentimental and exhibitionistic manner their own personal feelings and emotions.

Now, one finds documented in the history of music in performance often very amusingly, instances where performers are admonished or even castigated for being prone to errors such as these. It is tolerably well-known, for example, that Gluck's opinion of the singer-performers of his day was somewhat less than complimentary. In fact many of his operatic arias were deliberately written in such a manner as would prevent their being used as vehicles for virtuosic vocal embellishment on the part of singers.[1] Similarly, one sometimes hears it implied, Bach's writing out of embellishments indicates his displeasure with the manner in which his works were ornamented by performers at the time.

Closer to our own time, Brahms, Verdi and Stravinsky, to name but a few, all have made statements which imply hostility, contempt or, at the very least, mistrust of performers. Brahms is reported to have "declined an invitation to the opera saying that if he sat at home with the score he'd hear a better performance."[2] Verdi, speaking of creativity in performance as "a conception that leads to the abyss," insists "I want only one single creation, and I shall be quite satisfied if they (i.e. performers) perform simply and exactly what he (the

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[1] See Alec Harman and Wilfrid Mellors, Man and His Music (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1962)

[2] See Richard Taruskin, "On letting the Music Speak for Itself: Some Reflections on Musicology and Performance" in The Journal of Musicology, Vol. 1 No.3 July 1982 p.339.

composer) has written."[3] Last, but by no means least, Stravinsky argues

> The St Mathew's Passion by Johann Sebastian Bach is written for a chamber-ensemble. Its first performance in Bach's lifetime was perfectly realized by a total force of thirty-four musicians, including soloists and chorus. That is known. And nevertheless in our day one does not hesitate to present the work, in complete disregard of the composer's wishes, with hundreds of performers, sometimes almost a thousand. This lack of understanding of the interpreter's obligations, this arrogant pride in numbers, this concupiscence of the many, betray a complete lack of musical education.[4]

Now underlying all of these statements are two controversial but by no means unfamiliar assumptions: (1) that there is one ideal performance for each musical composition -- the one the composer "intended" -- i.e. imagined in his head as he wrote, or at the very least, referring more directly to the Stravinsky quotation, the one he expected to get from current instruments and contemporary performance practice; (2) that the goal of the responsible performer is, in Rosen's words "to

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[3] Verdi, quoted in Eugene Ormandy's forward to Frederick Dorian, The History of Music in Performance (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1942) p.7.

[4] Igor Stravinsky, Poetics of Music, trans. Arthur Knoedel and Ingolf Dahl (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947) p.173.

renounce the delights of imagination and realize this ideal sounding as closely as possible."[5]

Both of these ideals find expression in our present day notion of "historically authentic performance." Therein, performers' "complete lack of musical education" is remedied by historians and/or musicologists ascertaining through empirically documented research how a particular composition was played during the composer's lifetime, in what style, with which instruments and how many of them were in his orchestra, and thence passing it on to performers[6] whose task it is to translate that information into actual sound sensation.

The notion of intentions is retained here, moreover, in that it is assumed that the style of performance practised at the time was the one in terms of which the composer originally "conceived" his work. That is to say, the manner in which musical works were originally performed was one "intended" by the composer (more or less).[7] Hence, the argument goes, if

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[5] Charles Rosen, "The Shock of the Old," review of Authenticity and Early Music: A Symposium edited by Nicholas Kenyon (Oxford University Press, 1988) in The New York Review, July 19, 1990.

[6] Compare Dorian's admonition to interpreters that in order to become "fully acquainted with all the customs surrounding the score at the time of its creation" they should "lean on the accumulated knowledge of the trained historian as the true guardian of the authentic style." Dorian, op.cit. pp.31-32.

[7] I say "more or less" because of course there is considerable evidence to suggest that for a variety of reasons, musical works were not always performed very well during the composer's lifetime. Hence the reluctance of devotees of historical authenticity to commit themselves unreservedly to the reconstruction of original performances or modes of performance. For were they to do so, they would find themselves committed to the perpetuation of what was bad as well as what was good in the latter. Invocation of the composer's intentions, however, enables them to circumvent these problems. For since it is reasonably assumed that composers intend among other things, the best possible

we recreate all of the external conditions which obtained in the original performance of a piece, we will thus recreate something of the composer's inner experience of the piece and so in effect realize his intentions.[8]

Neither can it be denied that historical scholarship has opened up a whole new world of interpretive possibilities to

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performance of their works, allying intentions with information about original performances or original modes of performance enables them to sidestep the problems that would have historically accrued. See Charles Rosen, "Should Music be Played Wrong?" High Fidelity, XXI, 5 (May 1971). Also James O. Young, "The Concept of Authentic Performance" in The British Journal of Aesthetics, Vol.28, No.3 Summer 1988. Also Peter Kivy, "On the Concept of Historically Authentic Performance" in The Monist, Vol.71, No.2, April 1988.

[8] See Taruskin, op. cit. Also Lawrence Dreyfus, "Early Music Defended Against its Devotees" in The Musical Quarterly, Vol.69, No.3, Summer, 1983. Rosen would not agree with this inclusion of intentions. Rather, he sees historical authenticity as dispensing for the most part with the notion of intentions altogether and focusing exclusively instead on historically accurate modes of performance ( "The Shock of the Old" op. cit.) I am more inclined to agree with Taruskin and Dreyfus. For as they document (and I myself have encountered in personal experience) when the question is raised, "why should we seek to perform works in the manner of their original performance?" the answer is almost inevitably given: "because in that way the composer's intention is realized." It must be emphasized here that in construing intentions thus in terms of empirically ascertainable facts and seeing their realization purely in terms of sound, historical authenticity radically departs from the earlier romantic, mainstream style of performance. For where performers therein often spoke of being faithful to the composer's intentions, they construed intentions in much more spiritual, metaphysical or emotional terms. Moreover, they saw their realization (which they sought to achieve through imaginative, empathetic identification with the composer) much more in terms of the "effect" of a performance. Historical Authenticity preaches no such imaginative, empathetic leaps into the past. Rather what it has in mind is "a strictly empirical programme to verify historical practices, which, when all is said and done, are magically transformed into the composer's intentions" Dreyfus, op. cit. P. 299 For an illuminating account of the two notions of intentions see Taruskin, "The Pastness of the Present" in Nicholas Kenyon (editor) Authenticity and Early Music. (Oxford University Press, 1988).

the performer.[9] The revival and technical exploration of older instruments, revealing as they do wonderfully illuminating aspects of phrasing, articulation, rhythm, dynamics and so on, lays bare a rich and subtle range of sounding possibilities hitherto unthought of. No less important, research into the ways composers evidently expected their music to be played, the publication of "Urtext" (i.e. clean, unedited, scores), the exploration of the culture and society that surrounded them - all of these raise questions and generate new, exciting ideas as to what constitutes excellence in interpretation. One cannot, in fact, overstate the liberating expansion of horizons that historical scholarship proffers to musical interpretation. The possibilities it suggests are immense; the challenges it sets, wonderfully vitalizing. Never before have listeners had access to such an exotic palate of tone colours. Never have performers had so much with which to feed their interpretive imaginations, were they only allowed to use them.

But do historians and/or musicologists seriously purport to claim that their discoveries "reveal"[10] the manner in which composers "intended" their works to be performed? And that therefore performers should renounce the delights of imagination and instead, simply translate into sound as closely as possible, the ideal performance "revealed" therein? Do they claim to "reveal" the manner in which musical works were

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9 For a succinct summary of these "new" possibilities, see Raymond Leppard, Authenticity in Music (London: Faber Music, 1988) Chapter V.

10 I deliberately choose the word "reveal" here for its connection with the religious notion of "revelation".

originally performed? I have found no such claims in actual print (because of course, as we shall see in a moment any such claims are completely untenable). But for all that no-one apparently claims any of the above, one hears an awful lot of noise to that effect. Taruskin, Leech-Wilkinson and Temperly all speak of the historical performance movement acquiring airs of "moral superiority" and cite instances of devotee critics "condemning other styles of performance as 'wrong' or 'unjustified.'"[11] Leppard speaks of its having "sometimes resulted in restriction and a sort of mean-spirited isolationism, promoting the formation of musical cults."[12] Dreyfus talks of rescuing it "from its moralizing devotees."[13] Finally Kerman describes authenticity as a "baleful term which has caused endless acrimony" - for its association among other things with "art connoisseurs who evoke it to confound forgery."[14]

Neither has creative-imagination fared well in this rarefied atmosphere. Donington, for example, speaks of "Romantic exaggerations [tending] . . . to be over-compensated by austere understatements no nearer to the spirit of the originals and considerably more inhibiting to our musicianly

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[11] Richard Taruskin, Daniel Leech Wilkinson, Nicholas Temperly and Peter "The Limits of Authenticity: A Discussion" in Early Music Vol. 12 No. 1, Feb. 1984.

[12] Leppard, op. cit. p. 28. It is also perhaps worth mentioning that in another article in Keynote Magazine (New York, October 1982) Leppard responds angrily to those who "claim that the actual playing of these specialized instruments is the "only" way for the music to be performed." (The parenthesis on "only" is my own).

[13] Dreyfus, op. cit. P. 298.

[14] Joseph Kerman, Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology (Harvard University Press, 1985). p. 192.

enjoyment."[15] Along similar lines Leech-Wilkinson, noting that the "more recent authentic performance is characterized by relatively uniform tempo and dynamics, a 'clean' sound and at least an attempt to avoid interpretive gestures beyond those notated or documented as part of period practices, pleas for a greater freedom of approach, for more wide-ranging experiments and for the possibility of greater intensity of expression."[16]

In short, one only has to examine the proliferation of articles dealing with historical authenticity in musical and philosophical journals of the last ten years, to realize that somehow, somewhere an atmosphere of orthodoxy and restriction has come to surround the historical performance movement.[17] From whence this atmosphere comes, no one seems to say, (Dreyfus interestingly speaks of a "conspiracy of silence").[18] But come it has. And its effects are felt throughout the practice that is "music in performance."

Now I must state immediately that I believe the restrictive use of scholarship in musical interpretation to be profoundly wrong. I also see it as ultimately corruptive of and detrimental to the art of music in performance. And I deplore

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15 Robert Donington, Baroque Music: Style and Performance (London: Faber Music, 1982) p. 1.

16 Daniel Leech Wilkinson in "The Limits of Authenticity: A Discussion" op. cit. pp. 14-15.

17 For an excellent over view of all of these developments see Nicholas Kenyon's Introduction to Authenticity and Early Music: A Symposium op. cit.

18 Dreyfus, op. cit.

its influence in musical performance pedagogy. I would charge it with fostering vicious rather than virtuous charcter traits and dispostions.

For if creativity in interpretation always stands in danger of going too far and endorsing a kind of licentious freedom and an excessive reliance on intuitive flights of fancy, scholarship in interpretation no less always stands in danger of going too far and endorsing a kind of crippling uniformity and an excessive reliance on scholarly research; if the one has the potential of under-valuing traditional practical principles of interpretation and over-emphasizing creative imagination at their expense, the other has the potential of over-valuing traditional practical principles of interpretation, of conceiving of them as sacrosanct edicts to be obeyed ("realized") at all costs.

Because scholarly interpretation has the potential of becoming thus restrictive (which potential seems to be being realized, at least to some extent, in present day performance praetice), I propose to review the arguments as to why such restrictiveness is in fact completely untenable. I must emphasize again, however, that this is not intended to denigrate in any way the invaluable contribution that historical scholarship has to offer to musical interpretation. Rather, my intention is to forestall its restrictive, narrowing potential.

Before proceeding further, we must first ascertain what sorts of empirical facts musicologists adduce as evidence as to how composers intended their works to be performed; and/or as to how they were originally performed. This evidence

usually takes a variety of forms:[19] through exhaustive examination of composers' letters and notebooks a musicologist may discover instructions on how to perform a particular piece; or reports may survive about how composers actually performed their compositions; or musicologists may discover through examination of treatises, general histories of the period, pictures, etc. information as to the manner in which particular works were originally performed - i.e. the circumstances acoustical and otherwise, in which they were presented, the instruments employed to present them, the general style of performance (e.g. the mode of phrasing, tempi, dynamics etc.) they received.

And, as was suggested earlier it is sometimes conjectured that since composers themselves were usually involved in those original performances, and moreover as participants in the relevant community presumably "conceived" their works in terms of the style of performance practiced at the time, the manner in which the work was originally performed corresponds more or less to that "intended" by them.

My discussion of these issues will be as follows: first of all I will argue that even if we accept the notion of their being one "ideal" performance for each musical work, the evidence adduced by musicologists cannot be taken as sacrosanct because we can never be sure that it adequately conveys either

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19 See Leppard, "Authenticity in Music" op. cit. Chapter 4. Also, Taruskin, Leech-Wilkinson, Temperly, and Downey, "The Limits of Authenticity: A Discussion", op. cit.

the composer's intentions or the manner in which works were originally performed; second I will argue that whether it conveys the latter or not, scholarly evidence is not sacrosanct, because good musical interpretation need not cleave to either the composer's intentions or to original modes of performance.

First of all with regard to composers' instructions about how to perform their works: one must make an important distinction between what an instructive utterance means and what the composer means (or meant) by it.[20] That is to say, there is a distinction to be made between the meaning that can be put upon the words used in the instructive utterance and that which the composer meant by the words she used. For whereas the two may coincide, they may also be opposed. Indeed, even where there is no opposition, the former (i.e. what the utterance means) will usually have a wider scope than the latter (i.e. what the composer meant by the utterance).[21] Now all of this adds up to the very real possibility of misinterpretation of composers' intentions. It suggests that instructive utterances may themselves misleadingly describe the manner of interpretation the composer had in mind or may be taken to do so. And since we cannot know by persual of the utterance alone whether or not what we take it to mean coincides with that meant by the

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20 See George Dickie, Aesthetics: An Introduction (Indianapolis: Pegasus Books, 1971) Chaper 12.

21 See John Kemp, "The Work of Art and the Artist's Intentions" in Melvin Rader (ed.) A Modern Book of Aesthetics 4th Edition (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1973).

composer, opposes that meant by him, or just slightly misses the mark, it cannot be assumed that instructive utterances unerringly reveal composers' intentions. And therefore it cannot be argued that they must categorically be followed.

To argue, however, that one is not categorically obligated to follow composers' instructive utterances is not at all to suggest that they may be dismissed as irrelevant. For it is reasonably assumed that composers' utterances reflect some intelligent ideas on their part as to how to present their works in actual performance. And such ideas manifestly deserve careful consideration. However, to consider carefully composers' instructive utterances is not to follow them unquestionally. Rather it is to accord them the status of recommendations, the validity of which may be checked against other aspects of the interpretive process (e.g. the general character of the music indicated in the score), and the function of which is not so much to obviate choice and judgement on the part of performers, as rather it is to facilitate it. For especially in situations where performers are totally unfamiliar with a composers' creative style, the information and insights composers utterances yield may stimulate and enhance the performer's own understanding of the music[22] thereby enabling her to make more informed, intelligent choices as to how to convey aural understanding of it. In

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22 See Henry David Aiken, "The Aesthetic Relevance of Artists' Intentions" in Morris Weitz, (editor) Problems in Aesthetics (New York: Macmillan Co. 1959).

summary, it is no part of my argument that because we cannot be sure that the words used in composers' verbal directions adequately convey their intentions, therefore they may be ignored by performers. Rather, my purpose here is to counteract that attitude which fallaciously confers on them the status of "revelation" and venerates them accordingly.

Second, with regard to composers' renditions of their own works: one cannot be sure either that these adequately convey how composers' "intended" their music to be performed. For it is in the nature of intentions that one does not acheive them by simply intending to achieve them. Rather, in typical cases, the objective intended is achieved by something other than and in addition to the having of the intention. In the case of composers' renditions of their own works, the objective "intended" -- the sounding of their original tonal imagined, is achieved not only by their "intending" to perform the compostion in such a manner as corresponds to that tonal imagining, but also by their having sufficent technical and craft skills to carry out their intentions. And because composers may not possess the requisite skills or, even more probable given the subtle, complex nature of the skills involved, because at any given time in any given performance a composer's skills may fail to do the job, one cannot blithely assume that their renditions fulfilled their intentions. And therefore, once again, one cannot be sure that they adequately convey how composers "intended" their music to be performed.

But if one cannot guarantee that even a composer's own performance reveals his intentions, even less can one assume reports on those performances to do so. For in this case neither can we assume that in the performances described composers actually fulfilled their intentions; nor can we assume, even if they did that the reports in question accurately and unerringly describe the manner in which composers performed their works. However, although this suggests that we cannot treat reports as sacrosanct revelations, this is not to dismiss such reports as entirely irrelevant. Rather, as with instructive utterances, it is to view them as offering valuable insights into worthwhile modes of performance. Such insights should indeed be taken into consideration.

Finally with regard to "original" performances: it is to my mind a rather large leap of faith to assume that the manner in which musical works were originally performed was one "intended" by the composer. For no less than today, especially where large scale works such as operas and oratorios were involved, economic factors, most specifically the tastes of those pulling the purse strings, dictated the manner of performance a work received. And in most cases, we have no way of knowing whether or not those economic factors frustrated or overruled the composer's ideas as to how the work should be presented in performance.[23]

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[23] See Taruskin's amusing description of an authentic reconstructed performance of one of Verdi's operas. Taruskin "On Letting the Music speak for itself" op. cit. p. 341.

Similarly with regard to the composer's choice of medium musicologists tend to assume that a composer's indication of a particular instrument for the performance of his work reflects a careful, conscientious and deliberate evaluation on his part as to the best medium wherein to sound his composition.[24] But here one might ask: does the selection of a particular instrument indeed reflect the latter? Or could it not just as probably reflect practical pragmatic considerations such as availability? And even if it does reflect the former, was restriction originally built into that selection? Did the composer "intend" his choice to preclude the possibility of the work being performed on other appropriate instruments?

Lastly with regard to stylistic conventions of performance - e.g. historical modes of phrasing, tempi, dynamics, etc. one has to be very careful in applying to the music of a particular composer, general performance conventions prevalent at the time. For evidence suggests that in actual practice, those conventions were far from universally valid.[25] Instead, each time and place tended to have its own styles and practices.

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[24] As Dipert relevantly remarks, "Unfortunately, any bit of information about how a composer once casually indicated or reflected that he wished his pieces to be performed is automatically upgraded into performance "intentions" to be obeyed at all costs. The extent of this practice is generally proportional to the deification of the composer." Randall R. Dipert, "The Composer's Intentions: An Examination of their relevance for Performance" in The Music Quarterly, Vol. 66 no. 2 April 1980, p. 211 For some interesting examples of how composers' comments may indeed very easily by read out of context, see Erich Leinsdorf, The Composer's Advocate, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981. Chapter 3, "Knowing what Composers Wanted."

[25] See Frederick Neumann, Essays in Performance Practice (Ann Arbor, Michigan: U.M.I. Research Press, 1982) Chapter I "The Use of Baroque Treatises on Music Performance."

Furthermore, not less then than now, personality and temperament were legitimate variables.[26]

But this suggests that neither can we be sure that stylistic conventions of performance practiced at the time pertain to the manner in which composers "intended" their works to be performed nor even to the manner in which they were "originally" performed. Rather than being stringently adhered to, notions of performance extracted thereof are more reasonably taken into consideration a yielding valuable insights into probable modes of performance.

But I would now like to argue that even if scholarly evidence did incontrovertibly convey information as to the composer's "intended" sounding or the manner in which works were originally performed, notions of performance extracted thereof would still not be sacrocanct because good musical interpretation need not cleave to either of the above.

For what is a good musical interpretation? I have argued throughout this thesis that a good musical interpretation is one which aptly and eloquently facilitates aural understanding and thereafter appreciation of musical works. And I have also argued that musical scores are too schematic to determine exactly how they are to be realized in sound sensation, that instead they are susceptible of being sounded in a variety of subtly different ways all of which may claim to convey

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[26] See Robert Donington, op. cit.

adequate, equally well-founded albeit subtly different modes of aural understanding.

But several equally valid modes of interpretation being possible, there is no reason above and beyond matters of taste to prefer one as yielding better, more adequate aural understanding than another. And the intrusion of the factor of taste here introduces plausible objections to according "privileged" status to original modes of performance and/or composers' "intended" soundings.

For tastes change. And whereas an original mode of performance (and/or composer's "intended" sounding) inevitably projects a mode of aural understanding which reflects performance styles and interpretative values in vogue at their own time, it is entirely possible that for an audience accustomed to and familiar with different performance styles and values, those modes of interpretation will prove less than satisfactory.

Instead, in situations like these, an alternative mode of sounding, one which while no less well-founded, nevertheless incorporates and accommodates more contemporary performance values might well yield a "better," more lucid, coherent aural understanding. And alternative and even potentially better modes of aural understanding being at least in principle possible, one cannot accord privileged, much less "sanctified," status to original modes of performance and/or composers' "intended" soundings.

But if one need not grant privileged sanctified status to original modes of performance and/or composers' intended soundings "per se," even less need one grant it to those versions of the latter which are based exclusively on historical scholarship, which under the guise of counteracting the "well known" tendency of performers to engage in virtuosic and emotional interpretive excesses, allow nothing to intrude into the performance that cannot be authenticated thereby essentially seeking to replace creative imaginativeness on the part of performers, with historically gleaned information.

This approach to musical performance vitiates the whole notion of interpretation altogether. The central problem here, leaving aside naive assumptions about the capacity of "original" performances to yield evidence as to composers' intentions, is the fallacious assumption that equates silence with prohibition, that presupposes that "everything is forbidden, that nothing existed that is not specifically authorized"[27] in a music score, a treatise or some other such source.

For the fact of the matter is that a great deal existed outside of what was recorded in music scores, treatises and other such sources. But we can never really know what that great deal consisted of because (as has already been suggested in this thesis), language and musical notation can only characterize in vague, unspecific, generalized terms the subtle tonal qualities of sound sensation. Now it follows from all of

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[27] See Frederick Neumann, op.cit. p.5.

this that to urge performers on grounds of strict accountability to employ only those interpretive gestures that can be "authenticated" -- that are explicitly annotated or documented in historical sources, is essentially to force them to deal in generalities. But, and herein we may see the inherent fallaciousness of this view, to deal in generalities is not to perform the music as it was performed in its own day. For albeit musical and historical sources may yield no evidence about such musical subtleties as phrasing, dynamics, tempi and the like, this does not mean that performers played without phrasing and dynamics and (ridiculously) in no tempo. Instead to deal in generalities is to document in sound the state of the evidence[28] -- the extent of our (generalized) knowledge about how music was performed in its own day.

But, and herein we may see the ultimate absurdity of this view of interpretation, to document in sound the state of the evidence is specifically not to interpret the music -- not particularize in sound what is only generally indicated in music scores and historical sources. Rather it is to realize literally and mechanically what is indicated therein. It is to produce the "aural equivalent of a clean, unedited Urtext score."[29] It is to urge performers consciously to set out to do what heretofore

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28 See Taruskin "On Letting the Music Speak for Itself," op.cit. p.343.
29 See Taruskin, Leach Wilkinson et al., "The Limits of Authenticity: A Discussion" op.cit.

they were always chided for doing -- it is to urge them merely to play the notes.[30]

In short, to seek to combat performers' interpretive excesses by replacing creative imagination with historically gleaned information is to throw the baby out with the bath water and promote (fallaciously) as correct and authentic a uniform, mechanical generalized mode of sounding which ultimately divests the music of life and quality. Neither is such a restrictive move even necessary. For it is not imaginatively going beyond accredited sources "per se" which leads to interpretive vice, rather it is doing so in an unthinking, ignorant, undisciplined and virtueless manner.

And herein it may now become obvious why I so heartily deplore the influential presence of the restrictive musicological approach to interpretation in performance pedogogy. For quite apart from the fact that it stultifies the art of musical interpretation through promoting, on highly spurious grounds, the dubious notion of a single, definitive and ultimately totally inadequate mode of sounding, this approch totally subverts in the name of righteousness all of the moral educational goods that accrue to learning the art of music in performance.

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30 Although this may seem to be an exaggeration of the restrictive musicological position, one hears stories and examples where exactly this has occurred. Tureck gives the example of an "internationally famous conductor saying to an orchestra in rehersal: 'Gentlemen, there are no dynamic markings in the score, therefore we play without dynamics'" Rosalyn Tureck, An Introduction to the Performance of Bach (Oxford University Press, 1960) Book III p.7. Taruskin, Leech-Wilkinson et al., "The Limits of Authenticity" op.cit. All speak of this type of phenomenon occurring at present in musical performance circles.

On this approach, rather than learning to think for themselves, rather than learning to figure out in a responsible, conscientious, caring, open-minded, intelligent, imaginative and critical manner what or what not to do, students instead learn to listen and obey, to carry out unquestioningly and unwaveringly what they are told to do by the acknowledged experts; rather than learning to accept personal responsibility for their conduct, projects and purposes, students instead learn to relinquish it; rather than coming to care for excellence, and therefore coming to cultivate and put into practice the various virtues of thought and character that the latter requires, students instead come to care for staying in line and cultivating the obsequious vice of blind, unthinking obedience to authority.

The sad thing is that that which restriction seeks to achieve through fear and negative prohibition -- concern and respect for composer's musical works, is much better achieved by virtuous training, especially training in the virtue of personal authenticity. Moreover, by thus providing an arena in which virtuous dispositions may be cultivated and put into practice, the educational value of the art of music in performance goes far beyond its purely musical goals and embraces instead some of the central purposes of moral education. It is the moral educational dimension of the aesthetic practice of musical performance that I now wish to consider.

# CHAPTER V

## Musical Performance and Moral Education

It is commonplace for people to regard an education in music as being primarily for the sake of pleasure or play and hence as something not fundamentally serious. Band programmes, for example, are seen as pleasurable options designed to provide relaxation from the more exacting demands the core disciplines place on students. Children take private instruction in musical instruments typically, not so much with the aim of becoming professional musicians, as rather to gain access as mature adults to a pleasing pastime. In short, music (and other arts options) tend to be seen as curriculum "frills," activities which are "nice" for students to engage in but which have little or nothing to do with the real business of life.

The central argument of this thesis, however, that artistic activities such as music provide a kind of arena in which the virtues may be cultivated and exercised, presents a rather different picture of the underlying value of the so-called "soft" arts options, one that suggests a much more serious purpose than play or pleasure or even the training of professional artists. Succinctly, it argues that an education in an artistic activity such as musical performance constitutes in effect a

form of moral education; and that as such, it, and other arts options, have very much to do with the real business of life.

The notion of music in performance having a morally educative dimension is not at all new. As was suggested earlier, Aristotle articulated exactly such an idea in The Politics. Indeed it is rather amusing to consider that the arguments developed therein were explicitly designed to convince his contemporaries, who, like ourselves, believed by and large that an education in music was primarily for the sake of pleasure, that music (and thence music education) had a more honourable nature -- its capacity to "make the character better."[1] In other words for Aristotle, the fundamental power of music, and therefore the primary purpose of music education was "moral" education. It is precisely this notion, drawing together all that has gone before, that I propose to explicate and defend in this final chapter.

I will begin by delineating exactly what I have in mind when I speak of "moral education." Until very recently, under the ascendancy of Kohlberg -- i.e. roughly from about the late 1950s to the early '80s, academic discourse about moral development and moral education has seen the latter as very much a cognitive affair, one primarily concerned with acquiring and developing knowledge and understanding of general principles of conduct. However, just as the last twenty years

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[1] Aristotle, The Politics (1339a 41-42) translated Carnes Lord in Education and Culture in the Political Thought of Aristotle (Ithica and London: Cornell University Press, 1982).

have seen modern moral philosophers take a new interest in Aristotelian ethics,[2] so too one may discern in more recent work on moral education a growing interest in and attraction towards Aristotelian ethical-educational ideas.[3] Eschewing the exclusively cognitive approach, Tobin, for example straightforwardly characterizes moral development as "centrally a matter of acquiring virtues."[4] And she chides hitherto developed theories of moral development for (among other things) over-emphasizing "the educational role of developing a child's knowledge and understanding at the expence of awakening in him appropriate kinds of sensitivity and of stengthening him in what he finds difficult."[5]

Now, as will be obvious from the title of this thesis, it is primarily the Aristotelian approach which I have in mind when I speak of moral education. My argument that music in performance constitutes a form of moral education will be based on two claims: (1) that learning how to perform musical works fosters the acquisition and exercise of certain morally

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[2] See Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue (Indiana: Notre Dame University press, 1981); Philippa Foot, Virtues and Vices (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978); Peter Geach, The Virtues (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

[3] See Bernadette Tobin, "Development in Virtues" Journal of Philosophy of Education Vol. 20, No 2, 1986 and "Richard Peters Theory of Moral Development" Journal of Philosophy of Education, Vol. 23, No. 1, 1989; John and Patricia White, "Education, Liberalism and Human Good" in D. E. Cooper (Ed.) Education, Values and Mind (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986); Richard Peters, "Moral Development: a Plea for Pluralism" in Psychology and Ethical Development, (London: Allan and Unwin Ltd., 1974).

[4] Tobin, "Development in Virtues" op. cit. p. 201.

[5] Ibid., p. 201.

relevant and desirable character traits and dispositions -- in Aristotle's words that it makes the "character of a certain quality;"[6] (2) that it accomplishes this through being itself a form of moral conduct, one wherein one learns through doing and thereafter comes to be capable of wise practical judgement.

I shall begin by considering what is involved in Aristotle's notion of practical judgement. Practical judgement in the most general sense has to do with the application of general rules or principles to particular situations. And by extrapolation, moral judgement has to do with, the appropriate application of "moral" rules or principles to particular situations. Succinctly, Aristotle maintains that no moral rule or principle of conduct can be comprehensive enough to deal with the complexities of real life. Instead, he gives priority in decisions about practical conduct to what he calls "perception".[7] And he presents moral rules and principles of conduct as incomplete outlines[8] - i.e. schematic guides[9] whose worthy but nevertheless highly generalized dictates need to be

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6 Aristotle, The Politics (2339a 24-25) translated Carnes Lord, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1984).

7 "How far and how a man must stray before he becomes blameworthy, it is not easy to state in words; for the decision depends on the particular facts and on perception" Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics 1126b 2-4. translated David Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). See also 1109b 18-23 Ibid.,

8 "But this must be agreed upon beforehand, that the whole account of matters of conduct must be given in outline and not precisely" Ibid., 1103b 34-1104 a4.

9 See Charles E Larmore, Patterns of Moral Complexity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) p. 5.

supplemented by the wise and attentive judgement of the individual moral agent.

Now, a number of questions need to be raised here: first what is involved in the notion of moral rules and principles of conduct being incomplete outlines? And why does Aristotle present them thus? Second, what does Aristotle mean by perception? And why does he accord it priority in ethical decision making?

To "outline" a plan of action is to sketch out in the broadest possible terms without getting bogged down in concrete particulars what one generally proposes to do. So too, Aristotle suggests moral rules and principles of conduct only sketch out in the broadest possible terms without dwelling on concrete particulars how we generally ought to behave. And herein lies Aristotle's point about the necessity of practical judgement: precisely because moral rules and principles are thus "general," they do not have sufficient content to settle by themselves exactly when the obligations they encapsulate are incumbent upon us, and how they are (in a moral sense) correctly to be carried out.[10] Instead this has to be figured out by the individual moral agent, which figuring out entails beyond what the rules by themselves can tell us and employing wise practical judgement.

Since all of this is manifestly best illustrated with an example, let us consider the following. In North America, we

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10 Ibid.,

characteristically feel under a certain obligation to behave generously towards waiters and waitresses. And our obligation to be thus generous is typically encapsulated in the following general rule of conduct: "leave a tip to the server for services duly rendered." But notice that although the rule of conduct clearly delineates a particular course of action (e.g. leaving tips for services), as right and appropriate in certain types of circumstances (e.g. in restaurant situations wherein services are duly rendered), the rule is too schematic to settle by itself whether the particular situation we are confronting qualifies as one wherein generosity of this sort is indeed merited.

For what constitutes "services duly rendered"? Here a whole range of variables enter the picture. First of all, what sort of restaurant are we all attending? For whereas in fast-food restaurants speed would constitute one criterion of adequate service, in other higher-class establishments, speed would not even figure as a consideration. And even here, more variables yet enter the picture: although we would want and expect to be served quickly in fast food restaurants, we would not want the service to be "rushed." Similarly we would not want to be served too slowly in higher class restaurants. Moreover, although normally in fast food restaurants we would like and expect to be served quickly, we would also characteristically be prepared to take extenuating circumstances into account. Were the restaurant to be overcrowded and understaffed and our server manifestly run

off her feet, we would adjust our concept of what constituted "fast" service accordingly.

The same sorts of considerations enter into our appraisal of other aspects of the services rendered. Whereas normally we want and expect servers to be attentive to our needs, we would not want them to be too attentive -- were they to be rushing over every few minutes and asking anxiously was everything all right, we would feel harassed rather than duly attended to. But neither would we want them to be inattentive -- were they pointedly to ignore us and engage in conversation instead with their fellow servers, we would rightly consider the services rendered totally inadequate.

Finally, our own attitudes and dispositions introduce further no less important variables. For whereas restaurant patrons characteristically expect servers to be courteous and respectful, these may be interpreted in more or less submissive terms. And one's personal interpretation - e.g. the fact that one construes courtesy on the part of servers as entailing a certain measure of servility - will have a direct bearing on one's evaluation of the services rendered.

In summary, while moral rules and principles of conduct (such as the one quoted above) undoubtedly offer us moral guidance by delineating certain courses of action as right and appropriate in certain types of circumstances, in and of themselves they do not have sufficent content to determine whether the particular circumstances we find ourselves in are

ones in which such a duty has a claim on what we are to do.[11] One can decide this only when faced with the concrete situation. In the case of the example given, one needs to be present in the particular situation and take into account all of the relevant variables, including those pertaining to one's own attitudes and dispositions, in order to judge whether the service rendered is adequate, totally inadequate, barely adequate, better than average and so on.

And herein enters the second point mentioned earlier. One's evaluation of the services rendered not only determines whether or not one will leave a tip to the server (determines whether generosity is merited in this case), it also has a direct bearing on the amount one will leave (influences the manner in which one carries out one's obligation). For whereas once again we have a general guideline - that ten per cent of the total bill constitutes an adequate tip for services duly rendered - it is up to us to decide whether our particular circumstances merit exactly that amount, less than that amount, or more than that amount. Moreover it is up to us to judge how much more or how much less. And here again unforeseen variables may enter the picture. The server may turn out to be the daughter of a good friend. And for all sorts of highly personal reasons pertaining to the nature of that friendship, one may feel compelled to offer her daughter a particularly generous tip. Or, once again, particular attitudes and dispositions may influence

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[11] Ibid., p. 6

one's decisions. As before, one needs to be present in the particular situation and take into account all of the relevant particulars in order to judge what exactly constitutes the right course of action.

But now it may be argued, granted that we may have to go beyond the content of particular moral rules in order to judge whether the obligations encapsulated therein are applicable in particular situations, and to determine, thereafter if they are, how best to honour them. But are not our judgements based on reasons? And do not those reasons in effect embody further rules or sets of rules on the basis of which judgement operates? In the case of our specific example are there not criteria of adequate service to which we appeal in making our judgement?

Here, as Larmore observes, two considerations are important.[12] Wise judgements are indeed based on reasons. And in having particular reasons one may indeed be applying rules. But then any such rule (e.g. "adequate service is fast and efficient") will generally itself be schematic enough to require judgement for its interpretation in the particular circumstances. Consider what was said earlier about speed as a criteria of adequate service.

But it is not necessarily the case that in having particular reasons one is applying rules. Instead some particlar variable (e.g. the fact that the server is the daughter of "this" particular

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[12] Ibid., p. 8.

friend), may quite simply strike one as offering compelling reasons for adopting a particular course of action (e.g. leaving her a particularly generous tip). And while it might be pointed out to one after the fact, that various generalizable rules lie embedded in that reasoning, because these were not given in advance, it cannot be argued that they were in any sense "applied."

In summary: judgement is not reducible to (sets of) general rules. Rather, it characteristically entails going beyond the latter and taking into account what rules cannot accommodate -- the singular and unique particulars of concrete situations. It entails, in short, "perception."

Before going on, however, to consider "perception" and its role in moral deliberation, it is perhaps important to emphasize that Aristotle's delineation of moral rules and principles as incomplete outlines, is not intended in any sense to denigrate their importatnce in the moral life. Quite the contrary, Aristotle is only too aware of the importance of moral rules and principles. In fact, recognizing that we are not always good judges, he regards them as necessities in any such life.[13]

Rules, in Aristotle's view are useful and important[14] for purposes of moral education, or where some strong bias or

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13 "This is why we do not allow a man to rule, but rational principle, becaus a man behaves thus in his own interests and becomes a tyrant" Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 1134 a 35. See also The Politics, 1286 a 6.

14 For an excellent discussion of the importance of rules in Aristotle's thought see Martha Craven Nussbaum, Interpretive Essay 4, "Practical Syllogisms and Practical Science" in Aristotle's De Motu Animalium (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). Also "The Discernment of Perception: An Aristotelian Conception of Private and Public

passion might distort one's judgement. Also, where there is not time to formulate a fully concrete decision, taking into account all of the relevant particulars, it is better in his opinion to follow a sound general rule than make a hasty and inadequate concrete choice. Even for virtuous adults, rules have an important function. They guide us tentatively in our approach to the concrete situation, give us a starting place, help us to pick out significant features.

But for all that Aristotle is only too aware of the importance of general rules and principles in the moral life, he is no less aware of the danger of our applying them rigidly and inflexibly. Such inflexibility effectively preempts our taking into account relevant particulars not encapsulated in anteceedent rules and principles. And Aristotle's emphasis on perception is designed to forestall exactly that.

Succinctly, in according perception priority in ethical decision making, Aristotle is not so much encouraging us to "abandon" general rules and principles altogether,[15] as rather he is urging us to use them creatively in responding to the novel features that particular situations present. It is with this notion in mind - i.e. of employing moral rules and principles "creatively" that I turn to Aristotle's notion of perception. As may be gathered from his use of the term, Aristotle envisages perception as a kind of "seeing" - not however one we associate

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Rationality" in Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philsophy, Volume I, 1986 (Lanham: University Press of America 1986).

15 . . . we have to remember that general principle must also be present in the ruler's mind" Aristotle, The Politics 1286 a b.

with ordinary sense perception. Rather he envisages it as a distinctive type of cognition, one analogous to the kind of intellectual seeing that mathematicians employ, that enables them to grasp "that the particular figure before us is a triangle".[16] This kind of perception is insight ("nous") - the ability not to infer or deduce but rather simply to "see" pattern and structure in the flux of particulars,[17] grasp the universal principle at work in perceived phenomena.[18] And while insights of this sort are intellectual rather than sensual in nature in that they characteristically go beyond what is given in sense perception, so instantaneously does the appropriate universal principle come to mind upon perception of the particular phenomena, (i.e. so quickly is the perception of phenomena coupled with a realization of their significance), that one may not implausibly characterize such intuitions as a kind of immediate intellectual "sensing".[19] Hence Aristotle's notion that although such "seeing" are not the same as those of ordinary sense - perception nevertheless they are akin to the latter.[20]

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16 Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 1142 a 27-30.

17 See L.A.Kosman, "Understanding Aristotle's Posterior Analytics" in Lee, Mourelatos and Rorty (editors), "Exegesis and Supplementary Vol. I 1973. pp. 374-392.

18 See James H. Lesler, "The Meaning of 'Nous' in the Posterior Analytics Phronesis Vol 18 - no 1. 1937. pp. 44-68.

19 See J. Donald Monan, Moral Knowledge and its Methodology in Aristotle, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968) pp. 74-78.

20 See David Wiggins' excellent account of these matters in "Deliberation and Practical Reason" in Amrlie D. Rorty, ed., Essays on Aristotle's Ethics op. cit. pp. 221-240.

Perception then is "insight" or "intuition", [21] the immediate discrimination of significant features of a perceived object or situation. And practical insight, as anologous to the theoretical version developed above, is the immediate intelligent discrimination of ethically significant features of concrete situations. Practical insight is what enables us to make moral sense of the complex variables we normally encounter in ethical situations -- grasp that here's an exenuating circumstance, there's a morally relevant attitude, etc. It is centrally the ability "to recognize, acknowledge, respond to, pick out" morally salient features of particular situations[22].

Now as was suggested earlier Aristotle is absolutely insistent that this "intuiting" is not entirely dependent upon prior, existent moral principles. But if practical insight is not limited to seeing mechanically only those features the rules have already picked out as morally salient, but rather has a kind of creative dimension -- is capable of going beyond rules and apprehending the moral significance of concrete particulars that rules of their very nature cannot accomodate -- this is not to suggest that the Aristotelian moral agent arbitrarily assigns

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21 As Lesher (op. cit.) remarks, whether or not Aristotelian 'nous' may be taken as "intuition" depends largely on what we take "intuition" to mean. If to intuit something is simply to have an insight or realize the truth of some proposition then certainly "nous" will be "intuitive knowledge. If however we mean by "intuition" a faculty which acquires knowledge about the world in an 'a priori' or non-empirical manner, then it will be imappropriate to think of Aristotelian "nous" as "intuition."

22 Nussbaum The Fragility of Goodness (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). p. 305.

moral significance to whatever she chooses. On the contrary, practical insight is a highly disciplined, albeit open ended "skill," one we acquire or more correctly "learn" in and through experience.[23]

Where and how do we learn it? In MacIntyrean terms[24] we learn it through belonging to a particular tradition wherein that open-ended skillfulness is valued and put into practice. And where we too may learn (i.e. be trained) to cherish and exercise it. In more strictly Aristotelian terms we learn practical insight through growing up in a particular community in which (ideally) moral considerations are important and internalizing the values emboded therein. This internalization shapes and hones our cognitive faculties, our ways of "seeing" or "taking" the world, thereafter engendering right and appropriate conduct.

It is to this "shaping" of our cognitive faculties that we must now turn our attention. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to unpack more precisely what Aristotle has in mind when he speaks of "cognitive faculties." In doing so it may become clear why practical insight has been designated as in part a "creative" affair. Referring to them as "kritika" Aristotle presents cognive faculties as centrally being concerned with

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23 . . . "while young men become geometricians and mathematicians and wise in matters like these, it is thought that a young man of practical wisdom cannot be found. The cause is that such wisdom is concerned not only with universals but with particulars, which become farmiliar from experience, but a young man has no experience, for it is length of time that gives experience". Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics 1142 a 12-16.

24 Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue op. cit.

making distinctions,[25] with having a selecting or discriminatory power, the exercise of which enables us to see pattern and structure in the world around us. Unlike other philosophers however, (and especially unlike Plato), he ascribes this sorting or discriminatory power not just to the intellect but also to the parts of the soul traditionally called "irrational" - i.e. to the emotions and to imagination.

Now in trying to understand Aristotle's notion of imagination, it is very important to emphasize from the outset that the Aristotelian concept does not correspond exactly to modern conceptions. Thus, although his specific term "phantasia" conjures up the notion of free flights of fantasy, this is emphatically not the sort of thing Aristotle had in mind in using the term. Rather, his is a rich and complex notion, one very much belied by being construed as equivalent to our modern notion of fantasy.

What then does Aristotle mean by the term "phantasia"?

Since, according to Aristotle, all thought, even the most abstract, is of necessity accompanied by an imagining that is concrete, we may offer an initial depiction of Aristotelian phantasia as that which "ties abstract thought to concrete perceptible objects or situations the form of which it presents to the noetic faculty."[26] In other words phantasia is a kind of imaginative awareness. But although this is generally correct it

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25 See Nussbaum, Fragility. op. cit. p. 244

26 Nussbaum, "The Role of Phantasia in Aristotle's Explanation of Action", Interpretive Essay 5. in Aristotle's De Motu Animalium op. cit. p. 265.

does not capture the full force of Aristotelian phantasia. For the latter is a very special kind of awareness. Most specifically, it is one wherein we actively focus on some concrete particular, either present or absent, separating it out from its context and seeing (or otherwise) perceiving it in a richly vivid concrete way as "something to be pursued or avoided."[27]

Perhaps the best way to elucidate all of this is through an example. Accordingly, let us consider the following scenario: having walked several miles on a sweltering hot day, I may perceive coming towards me a child carrying an ice-cream cone. And my physical condition - the fact that I am hot, tired and thirsty - may cause me to be "singularly struck" as it were, by the ice-cream, to focus on it almost to the exclusion of everything else. Thus I may imagine longingly and with rich and vivid concreteness the taste and texture of ice-cream, its coldness, the elimination of thirst it would provide etc. And responding to the vividness of this imagining, I may resolve to stop at the next store I encounter and buy one for myself.

Phantasia, in other words, is not an idle imaginative awareness. Rather it is a highly concentrated awareness, one charged with personal interests and concerns, on the basis of which, unless prevented by an opposing judgement (e.g. that the ice-creams in the store I stop at appear to have "gone off"), the agent will normally feel impelled to act.[28]

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27 Nussbaum, "The Discernment" op. cit. p. 185.

28 Nussbaum, Aristotle's De Motu Animalium op. cit. pp. 261-262.

Furthermore, it is important to emphasize here, that far from creating unreality, imagination in this case instead heightens and intensifies reality. In imagining the ice-cream I do not freely invent new ice-cream qualities. Quite the reverse, my imagining focuses upon and heightens my awareness of normal, everyday ice-cream qualities. And it is this vivid recreation of concrete reality that induces me to act.

Now it is not difficult to conjecture how Aristole will use this notion of phantasia in practical moral matters. For in a morality in which perception by and large takes precedence over universal rules and principles, the heightened awareness afforded by phantasia could be a valuable asset in moral deliberation in that it could serve to make us intensely aware of concrete particulars that otherwise might slip by us or engage our attention in a manner too muted to elicit morally approprite action. Indeed, imaginative heightened awareness could be an extraordinary asset if it were extended to include vivid and detailed concrete awareness of alternate possible courses of action.

And in fact this is exactly what we find in Aristotle's notion of "deliberative phantasia."[29] In this, phantasia enables us not only to focus keenly on the relevant particulars of this situation confronting us, it also enables us to look to the future and to past experience and to envisage in all their rich and vivid detailed concreteness, alternative possible courses of

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[29] Ibid., pp. 263-265.

action enshrined therein. Such vivid, detailed (imaginary) awareness facilitates our weighing perspicaciously one alternative against the other, and thereafter we are enabled to decide more adequately the correct course of action to take, given all of the relevant concrete particulars.

No less than reason or imagination, the passions too in Aristotelian philosophy, are capable of making distinctions -- of playing a cognitive role. Indeed, far from endorsing a sharp split between the cognitive and the emotional, Aristotle instead presents them as two sides of the same distinction-making coin, the exercise and complementary interaction of both of which are necessary parts of good deliberation and thereafter of appropriate choice. Neither is it difficult to grasp why Aristotle adopts this stance. For bearing in mind once again that his is a morality in which good judgement is founded upon keen perception of relevant particulars, emotions may serve to make us aware of particulars reason operating independently might miss.

Once again we will employ a particular scenario to illustrate: it is readily apparent that a friend recently abandoned by her husband and facing life thereafter as a single parent in straitened financial circumstances is in need of help. To perceive that purely rationally, however, and not in any sense to empathize with her plight is to miss or not fully take in the true nature of what has befallen her. Furthermore, lacking that sympathetic response, one may be led to adopt "helping" measures that while not incorrect or inappropriate

nevertheless fall short of full morality. One may, for example, (appropriately) offer her temporary financial support, but (inappropriately) fail to offer her the kind of emotional support warranted given the circumstances and which it is reasonably assumed a friend would give.

But herein one may see why Aristotle assigns a cognitive role to the emotions. For in this case, empathy (especially combined with imaginative heightened awareness) enables us to see and to take into account particulars --e.g. my friend's feelings of rejection, of consequent worthlessness etc. that reason operating alone could barely scratch the surface of, but which are of vital importance in considering what one appropriately ought to do.

Indeed, in many situations (including the one described above), it will often be one's emotional response rather than detached rational thought that will lead one to make the appropriate recognitions[30] -- e.g. that a friend needs help. Without feeling, a constituent necessary part of perception is missing. Morally speaking, reason ignores emotion at its peril.

And now it may be seen why Aristotelian philosophy was characterized as presenting cognition and emotion as two sides of the same distinction-making coin. For as will have been gathered from the above, both are essentially modes of vision, the perspicacious interactive exercise of both of which furnishes potentially morally relevant information to the

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30 See Nussbaum, "The Discernment" op.cit. pp.186-89.

perceiving agent. To employ one without the other (or even to over-emphasize one at the expense of the other) is to miss out on a potentially significant source of information.[31] It is to ignore deliberately or inadvertently potentially important, morally relevant concrete particulars. In summary: Aristotelian moral perception is aptly described as "a high type of vision of and response to the particular,"[32] one which has emotional and imaginative as well as intellectual components all of which are eminently educable, all of which are capable of being shaped and honed.

It is to the nature and manner of this "shaping" that we must now return. As was suggested earlier, one learns practical insight through belonging to a certain moral tradition or moral community the internalization of whose values "disciplines" one's ways of "seeing" or "taking" the world, thereby engendering right and appropriate conduct.

What all of this means is that the person possessed of practical insight in the fullest possible sense (i.e. the person of "practical wisdom") is a person of good character. She is someone who is not just intellectually but also passionately committed[33] to being, among other things, just, fair, generous,

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31 While the example quoted earlier emphasizes the rational at the expense of the emotional, it is of course equally possible to do the reverse. I may, for example, (appropriately) offer my friend emotional support but (inappropriately) fail to offer the kind of hard-nosed pragmatic advice that will help her ultimately to gain control over her own life. Both of these fall short of "full" morality.

32 Nussbaum, "The Discernment" op.cit. p.196.

33 One cannot in fact over-emphasize the passionate element in Aristotelian commitment. For if the Aristotelian moral agent is not someone who merely sees in a detached fashion the point of being just,

compassionate, truthful, etc. in her everyday dealings. She is someone who, in figuring out what to do, is equally intellectually and passionately committed to reasoning in a certain manner, one that is (among other things) consistent, impartial, non-arbitrary, etc. In other words, the person of practical wisdom is someone who has acquired a specific kind of background. She is someone who brings to concrete practical situations a "disparate plurality"[34] of general conceptions, attachments and obligations (i.e. moral rules and principles) to all of which she is passionately and intellectually committed. And from all of which she derives ongoing guidelines for action, pointers as to what to look for in particular situations. These obligations, general conceptions and attachments structure the moral agent's seeing, enable her to make distinctions, pick out this and not that feature of the situation as morally salient.

Two questions now become important: (1) how does one come to acquire or develop this disciplined, structured "seeing"? And even more important, (2) how does one come to be passionately committed to the values embodies therein? On this Aristotle is unequivocal: one does so through doing.[35]

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compassionate etc. and of reasoning consistently, non-arbitrarily etc., neither is she someone who merely cares desultorily or sporadically about behaving thus. Rather she is someone who derives enormous personal satisfaction from her ongoing commitment to virtuous behaviour. She is someone who has made behaving virtuously such an integral part of her personal outlook on life, that she would be unhappy, indeed could not conceive of acting otherwise.

34 See Nussbaum "Aristotle" in T.J. Luce, ed., Ancient Writers (New York: Scribners, 1982) pp.397-404.

35 ". . . the virtues we get by first exercising them . . . For the things we have to learn to do before we can do them, we learn by doing them . . . we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts,

More specifically one does so through monitored doing -- through being shown how, and thereafter through guided practice coming to be able oneself, to assess situations and see what is called for; and through being schooled to take pleasure in the process[36] -- i.e. "love" figuring out and thereafter acting in accordance with one's insightful perception of what is required.

From whom do we learn this complex assessing? As in any practical, "how-to" activity, we learn it from people who are experienced in such matters, who already see and act wisely and who are capable of, as well as ready and willing to pass on the skill to others. Now in showing people how to assess situations and see what is called for, moral mentors inevitably teach certain general rules and principles. For without these the student will not even know where to begin looking for moral significance in the situation confronting her. And while particular situations frequently do encompass unique, novel features whose moral salience (or lack thereof) the moral agent has to figure out for herself, they also characteristically encompass repeated features whose moral salience has already been determined in pre-established general rules. And the insightful recognition of these as such,

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brave by doing brave acts . . ." Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 1103a 31-1103b 1.

36 "The soul of the student must first have been cultivated by means of habits for noble joy and noble hatred like earth which is to nourish the seed. . . The character . . . must somehow be there already with a kinship to virtue, living what is noble and hating what is base." Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 1179b 20-1179b 3.

no less than of the other as novel and uncharted is an essential, important ingredient of moral reasoning. In other words, the constant talk of creativity should not lead to the erroneous conclusion that Aristotelian perception rejects all guidance from the past.

On the contrary, Aristotelian perception is very much "guided" by the past. But the crucial point here is that it is "guided" not "bound." General rules and principles are indeed handed down from generation to generation but not as inviolate, sacrosanct laws. Rather they are handed down as superb exemplifications of practical judgement in action -- "summaries of the particular judgements of people of practical wisdom."[37] And the purpose of these summaries is not so much to get people to "see" and thereafter "act" in ways that have been deemed morally correct in the past, as rather it is to enable them to "use" past experience creatively in responding to the novel features that particular situations present.

But, and herein we may come to understand Aristotle's emphasis on "doing," in order to use and not just repeat guidance principles handed down from the past, one has, under expert supervision, to practice utilizing them in specific concrete situations until they become as it were "second nature" part and parcel of one's way of doing things. In other words, wise practical judgement is not something one acquires all at once. Rather, like any complex skill, it is something one

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[37] Nussbaum, "Aristotle," op.cit. p.400. Also, "The Discernment."

"perfects" through practice,[38] which practice progressively hones and refines one's discriminatory powers, thereby rendering one more and more capable of responding to and appreciating the moral significance of concrete particulars not taken into account in general rules and principles.

Now Aristotle holds that to make something second nature to one is among other things to learn to enjoy doing it, to come to take pleasure -- the appropriate pleasure -- in doing it.[39] In the case of wise practical judgement, it is to come to enjoy the insightful exercise of cognitive powers for its own sake, love for themselves the ethical ideals embodied in the guidance principles.

And on this too Aristotle is adamant: one learns to enjoy behaving in a manner that is ethically correct through behaving in a manner that is ethically correct. That is to say, through initially doing the right thing for reasons (e.g. gaining the mentor's approval), which while pleasurable, nevertheless are external to the moral enterprise itself, one gradually over time comes to see the moral exercise of cognitive powers as worthwhile in itself regardless of contingent rewards and/or punishments. One comes to enjoy and appreciate the moral

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38 I owe this notion of perfecting practical judgement through practice to Callan's insightful interpretation of Aristotle's famous comment -- "The virtues we get by first exercising them, as also happens in the case of the arts as well," Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 1103a 32. See Eamonn Callan, Autonomy and Schooling (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), pp.144-46.

39 See M.F. Burnyeat, "Aristotle on Learning to be Good," in Amelie Oxenberg Rorty, ed., Essays on Aristotle's Ethics (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

enterprise for its own sake. And thus having come to enjoy it, one simply has no desire to behave otherwise.

In summary: Aristotle envisages two things arising from the moral agent's "practising" performing right actions; (1) the agent will come to know not just theoretically or intellectually what constitutes right action, rather she will come to know it in the much deeper sense of having personally experienced acting thus and so "knowing" -- i.e. being vividly aware of all that it entails;[40] (2) the agent will come to develop a certain kind of character, one that not only "knows" what constitutes right action but also finds enjoyment in it -- i.e. sees it as desirable in and of itself.

It is at this point that the second part of Aristotle's ethical education comes into play. For having come to "know" what constitutes right and proper action, and even more important having come to take pleasure in acting virtuously, the moral agent is now ready to see this aspect of her life in a deeper perspective. She is ready to reflect upon and thereafter come to understand why the various actions she learned to see and to love as virtuous, are indeed the latter. She is ready to begin to comprehend how they fit together into the Aristotelian scheme of the "good life."[41] In essence, the latter part of Aristotelian moral education is designed to equip the moral agent with sufficient deep, comprehensive understanding to

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40 Ibid.

41 Ibid., p.81.

enable her to develop her own conception of the good life -- i.e., specify what will count for her as "living well."

But although a deeper more comprehensive understanding of the notion of "the good life" and of the constituent part virtuous qualities play therein may indeed provide a deeper, more reflective motivation[42] for virtuous conduct, Aristotle is adamant that in the final analysis no amount of argument, however persuasive, will bring someone to see that virtue is desirable in and of itself. To understand and appreciate the value that makes virtuous actions enjoyable (and hence desirable) in themselves one must learn for oneself to enjoy them. And that takes time and practice.[43]

It is here that we may at last reintroduce aesthetic practices and the art of music in performance in particular. Neither should it surprise us that the Arts make an appearance here. For these are areas we characteristically associate with imagination and emotion. Moreover, the notion of there being some connection between art and morality is neither new nor unfamiliar[44].

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42 Ibid.

43 "For he who lives as passion directs will not hear arguments that disuade him, nor understand it if he does; and how can we persuade one in such a state to change his mind? . . . The character . . . must somehow be there already with a kinship to virtue . ." Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 1179 26-31.

44 I have in mind in particular here Iris Murdoch's The Sovereignty of Good (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970). But see also Nussbaum, "Finely Aware and Richly Responsible: Literature and the Question of Philosophy (John Hopkins University Press, 1987), pp.167-191.

What sort of connection is being posited here? Basically it will be argued that the growth of musical competence draws upon a family of moral virtues - honesty, courage, modesty, to name but a few whose development can plausibly be interpreted along the lines of Aristotle's theory. It will be argued further that the operation of these virtues is governed by a power of judgement analogous to practical wisdom in respect to its connection with imagination, emotion etc. such that seriously pursuing the art of music in performance is one very important way of practising and developing the kind of character and vision required in moral deliberation. Finally it will be suggested, that the pleasurable nature of music renders it particularly effective in fostering enjoyment of virtuous behaviour.

It is to the putative analogous nature of moral and interpretive reasoning that we must first turn our attention. As will have seen from Chapter II, just as morality in Aristotle's view is not reducible to a set of antecedent rules or principles, neither is musical interpretation. For although the music score and practical principles handed down from tradition furnish general guidelines as to how the piece may be appropriately "sounded", in and of themselves these are too schematic to determine exactly how they are to be applied in concrete sound sensation.

Instead the performer has to figure this out for herself taking into account (and noting the interpretive significance of) concrete sounding particulars that neither musical scores nor

principles of performance practice can possibly take account of - e.g. the unique tone colour of the particular instrument on which the composition will be sounded, the acoustical environment in which the piece will be performed, the style of the composition, etc.

Now in going beyond the generalized guidelines proffered by the musical score and performance practice and taking into account concrete sounding particulars, performers employ a kind of musical "nous" in that they do not rate as equally important "all" the sensational properties they encounter in sound sensation. Rather they are selective. They "hear" (aurally perceive) some as more important than others, pick out this nuance and not that as interpretively significant, as yielding greater aural understanding of the musical phrase or sequence.

In other words no less than moral agents, performers employ a kind of creative insight in responding resourcefully to the concrete variables they encounter in particular sound sensation. Just as moral agents are capable of "seeing" the moral significance of new, uncharted concrete particulars so too musical performers are capable of "hearing" the interpretive significance of new hitherto unsounded nuances of concrete sound sensation.

Now because subtle tonal nuances are strongly evocative of the tonal inflections we characteristically employ to communicate our emotions and feelings, emotions play a

particularly important role in music in discerning the interpretive significance of particular soundings.[45]

But this is not to suggest that reason is totally eschewed therein. Neither is it to downplay the all important contribution of (deliberative) imagination. On the contrary, as the practice scenario developed in Chapter II suggests, in working out musical interpretation all of these ways of perceiving act and interact together. The rich, subtly creative, multifaceted nature of Aristotelian "nous" is powerfully exemplified in excellent musical interpretation.

Now no less than moral practical insight, to cite musical practical insight as "creative," is not to argue that the musical performer assigns interpretive significance to whatever she chooses. On the contrary, musical practical insight is a highly disciplined affair, one we learn through "monitored doing" - i.e. through belonging to a particular musical tradition or community and having the skill that is interpretive insight developed in us by masters of the art.

And it is here perhaps that one may begin to discern most powerfully the ramifications of musical education for moral education. For in teaching students to use and not just to repeat practical principles handed down from tradition master-teachers develop in them analogous excellences to those

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45 For a superb discussion of the emotionally educative capabilities of art works in this respect, see R.W.Hepburn's "The Arts and the Education of Feeling and Emotion" in Dearden, Hirst and Peters (editors), Education and Reason, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972) The quotations in this passage are from Hepburn's article.

employed in moral deliberation. Among other relevant "moral" type excellences they develop in them: honesty - the ability to admit to their interpretive failures and to acknowledge and seek to deal with traits of personality (e.g. virtuosic egoism) that interfere with the interpretive process; courage - the ability to go beyond convention and assert the interpretive strength of particular, idiosyncratic performances ; generosity - the ability to acknowledge and to develop interpretive excellence in others ; modesty - the ability to see and to acknowledge the important role of the composer in all their interpretations; empathy- the ability to "feel with " what is expressed in musical works, not to use them as vehicles for the undiscriminating, sentimental venting of personal feeling and emotion. And no less important they develop in them the excellences of intelligence characteristically associated with practical reasoning: deliberation, understanding, judgement, as well as the other excellences constitutive of such reasoning- e.g. impartiality, consistency, non- arbitrariness, patience, perseverance, exactness, industry, concentration, doubt, etc.

Most important of all, however, pursuing the art of music in performance fosters the virtue of authenticity- the firm disposition to "care " about getting things right. This "caring" in turn imposes on us the responsibility of imaginatively focusing upon and thereafter being fully appreciative of not just the obviously significant features of particular situations but also the not so obvious ones.

Authenticity as "care" effectively enjoins performers to scrutinize carefully the singular and unique tonal qualities of actual sound sensation, not to miss through evasiveness, abstractness or love of simplification, anything of interpretive relevance. And thus having made themselves vividly aware, it enjoins them responsibly and conscientiously to decide the appropriate thing to do given all of those relevant particulars.

How does music promote such "caring"? At this point we may return full circle and bring into play music's oft cited "pleasurable" nature. For our emphasis thus far upon the morally educative capabilities of music is not intended in any way to deprecate or take away from its inherent "enjoyableness." Quite the contrary, Aristotle sees that very pleasurableness as rendering it ideally suited to providing an education in virtue.[46]

How is it ideally suited thus? It will be remembered that for Aristotle virtue is inseparable from enjoyment - i.e. an act, however good is not truly virtuous unless the moral agent enjoys performing it. So too, in music virtue is inseparable from enjoyment. For what is characteristically enjoyed[47] in performing music is everything from superbly crafted sound

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46 See Aristotle, The Politics Book VIII, chapter 5.

47 I am referring here, of course to "intrinsic" enjoyment. And it is of course possible to enjoy performing music for extrinsic, extra-musical reasons (e.g. winning competitions etc.) But here again we may see an analogy with moral behaviour. For it is the task of the music-mentor to gradually ween the student musician away from extrinsic enjoyment and towards intrinsic enjoyment. This is accomplished (as in moral matters) through the student coming to discover for herself through doing, that music is worthwhile and enjoyable in and of itself.

sensation to minimally competent sounding - e.g. playing a tune in such a way as renders, at the very least, recognizable. And in order to attain either of those levels of performance (including all of the gradations in between), and thereby derive enjoyment from one's attainment, a certain greater or lesser amount of effort or "practice" is required. But in thus practicing, one is already developing and exercising in a more or less refined and discerning manner the various intellectual and character traits mentioned above.

In other words, musical enjoyment is intrinsically linked to virtuous behaviour. One can't have one without the other. And this being so, music is ideally suited to contributing to an education in virtue. For not only will one learn therein virtuous behavious, one will experience it as "enjoyable". And because we naturally or by instinct[48] "care" about what we enjoy, "the enjoyment of art is a training in the love of virtue."[49]

In summary, music in performance "is" a species of moral education. It fosters the acquisition and exercise of certain morally relevant and desirable character traits and dispositions. Moreover, it accomplishes this through being itself a form of moral conduct, one wherein one learns through doing and thereafter comes to love and to be capable of "practical wisdom."

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48 I am reminded here of Plato: notion - i.e. that beauty is the only spiritual thing we love "by instinct." See Plato, Phaedrus 250 in Murdoch, The Sovereignty of Good op. cit.

49 Murdoch, Sovereignty, op. cit. p. 86.

And while all of the above must obviously pertains to the moral education of the young, as Aristotle saw, the ongoing pursuit of music no less pertains to the ongoing moral development of mature adults.[50] For by ever directing our attention towards richly diverse and subtly complex patternings of sound sensation, musical compositions foster and exercise towards ever-increasing perfection our powers of aural perception. In effect, they continually offer the possibility of heightening and rendering more sensitive one of our ways of taking the world, which heightening encourages us not so much to be mindlessly subservient to universal rules and principles as rather to love and cherish the ideals embodied therein. And loving those ideals, we are encouraged to be always keenly responsive to the particular, always sensitively aware of the potential significance of concrete variables.

It is in fact "creativity", that much misunderstood notion, that ultimately connects art and morality. For as Nussbaum pertinently observes "the man of practical wisdom is the most flexible among us, his moral sensibility the least ossified by obediance to the universal".[51] To be truly an artist is ultimately to be a moral human being. To be truly a moral human being is ultimately, for Aristotle, to be an artist, "one who delights in

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50 Aristotle, The Politics, Book VIII, Chapter 5. I suspect this is also what Murdoch has in mind when she stresses the importance of the direction of our thinking, the kinds of object which hold our attention most of the time, to the kinds of action we choose. See Murdoch, Sovereignty op. cit.

51 Nussbaum, Interpretive Essay IV, "Practical Syllogisms and Practical Science" in De Motu Animalium, op. cit. p. 216.

virtuous actions . . . as the man trained in music delights in beautiful melodies".[52]

Du holde Kunst, ich danke dir . . .

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52 Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics (1170 a 8 -10).

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